8 killed in Baguio nightclub fire; 2 also die in Negros

Story on PAGE A17

Amla seeks freeze of kidnappers' loot

By Clarissa S. Batino

BESIDES checkpoints and foot patrols, authorities are using the powers of the Anti-Money Laundering Council to go after kidnappers, drug traffickers and terrorists.

AMLC executive director Vicente Aquino said the council was looking into bank accounts suspected of being maintained by criminals.

AMLA/ A20

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

Pulse Asia: Maceda report on Poe false

By Juliet L. Javellana

'TIS the season for manufactured survey results.

President Macapagal-Arroyo's campaign spokesperson yesterday accused the opposition of being behind a false

PULSE/ A4

NAGKAKA BULAHAN NA!

email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph Friday, December 12, 2003 ★★ 108 pages / 12 sections / vol. 19 / no. 4 P15 website: www.inq7.net

Book says Erap exec got ₱2M of Abu loot

Aventajado: Reimbursement twice Lepeng Wee expenses

By Armand N. Nocum

AN ADVISER of then President Joseph Estrada took P2 million of the ransom for the Abu Sayyaf hostages, or twice the "reimbursement" amount for purported negotiation expenses.

Robert Aventajado, Estrada's then chief negotiator, yesterday leveled this accusation at Lepeng Wee, Estrada adviser for economic affairs in Mindanao who was also negotiating for the release of the nine Malaysians among the group abducted by the Abu Sayyaf in April 2000 from the Sipadan resort in Malaysia.

Aventajado told the INQUIRER in a phone interview that he did not know how much was actually paid for the release of the nine Malaysians. However, he said, Wee "paid for the release of the first Malaysian hostage."

But for the P1 million he had purportedly advanced, Wee asked for P2 million in reimbursement, Aventajado said.

Asked if he was accusing Wee of pocketing part of the ransom, Aventajado replied: "At least from what we know, he spent P1 million and [was] reimbursed for P2 million."

He said he learned this only later, when he became close to Wee's emissary who supposedly told him "how much was really spent."

Contacted by the INQUIRER, Wee and his lawyer Tony Angeles declined to comment.

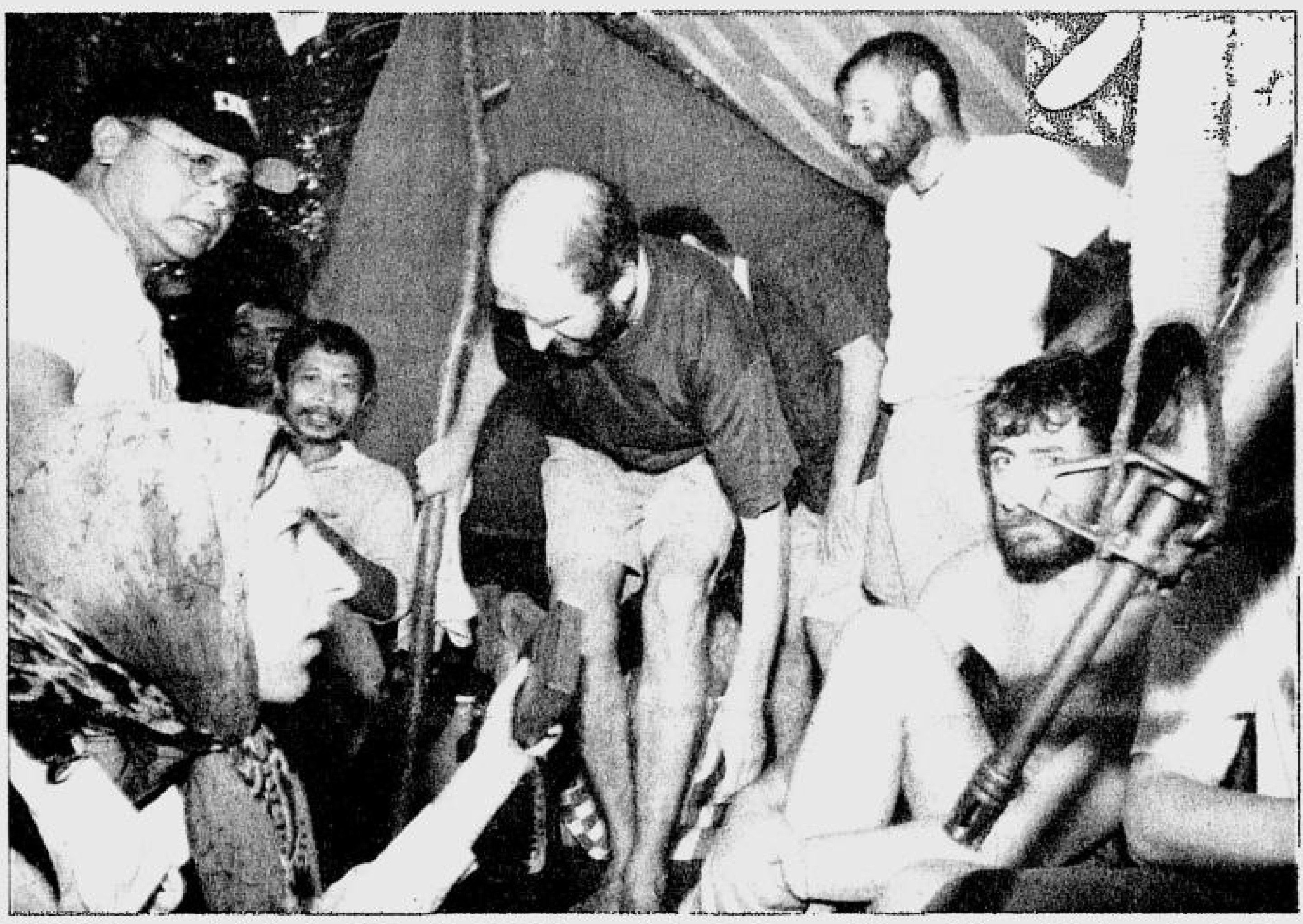
Angeles said Wee would rather wait for the chance to read for himself the accusations contained in Aventajado's book, "140 Days of Terror: In The Clutches of the Abu Sayyaf."

The INQUIRER faxed copies of five pages of Aventajado's book to Angeles and to Wee's family at noon yesterday. But Angeles said he and Wee were out of the office and would be able to read the pages only last night.

"Go ahead with the story. We just hope it's not libelous," the lawyer said.

But Wee's wife Cely phoned the INQUIRER and said that it was Aventajado who "got part of the ransom money," and

BOOK/ A20



THE WAY they were in the jungles of Jolo on May 27, 2000, a month after the Abu Sayyaf kidnapped 21 mostly foreign nationals at the Malaysian resort island of Sipadan. Standing at left is government negotiator Robert Aventajado while third from left in yellow shirt is Abu Sayyaf leader Commander Robot who was captured on Dec. 7. Aventajado launches his book today at Powerbooks. ROMEO GACAD/AFP

Camacho: Change political system

CHANGE the political system. The leaders, too.

The suggestion came from former Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho at a testimonial luncheon hosted for him yesterday by five business groups. *(See related story in Business, Page B1.)*

"We have to change our political system. We need to change our political leaders and bring back credibility, trust and sympathy and people who believe in who are leading them," Camacho said.

He later clarified his statement to reporters saying he had not been referring to specific leaders. "It is generic," he told the INQUIRER.

In his speech, Camacho said the country's current political system was inappropriate to move the country forward. He likened the Philippine economy to a four-wheel drive vehicle able to weather bumpy dirt roads well but unable to zoom ahead on a paved highway.

He mentioned the failure of Congress to quickly pass key economic bills such as the indexation of beer and tobacco taxes designed to boost revenue collection by P14 billion.

"Government has lost the ability to shape our future," Camacho said.

He said he favored two extremes for the political system—a unicameral parliamentary setup or a highly centralized form of government led by a president with very strong powers to push reforms and instill discipline in the ranks.

The government, he pointed out, was beset

CAMACHO/ A20

Palace: Noli to weaken FPJ; GMA to benefit

By Juliet Labog-Javellana, Michelle V. Remo and Norman Bordadora

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo's men are not losing sleep over Sen. Noli de Castro's reported plan to join the 2004 race for No. 1.

With De Castro's entry, "we are very confident that it will be a victory for the President," her campaign spokesperson, Housing Secretary Mike Defensor, yesterday told reporters in Malacañang.

A ranking official also said a De Castro run for president or vice president would be "favorable" to Ms Macapagal. The official, who asked not to be named, cited the results of the November survey of Pulse Asia Inc. which showed that she would win if she ran against seven other candidates.

If De Castro guns for the presidency, he will join the company of Ms Macapagal, Sen. Panfilo Lacson, Raul Roco and Fernando Poe Jr.

Edgardo Espiritu, Philippine ambassador to the Court of St. James's in London, said Wednesday that De Castro was planning to run for president and that the business sector was looking to him to prevent a Poe victory.

PALACE/ A4

PDI writer bags 3 Ford journ awards

THREE INQUIRER motoring stories written by reporter Tessa R. Salazar bagged three of nine Henry Ford Journalism Awards during ceremonies held in Makati on Wednesday night.

Salazar won the Auto Innovation Story award for "The outdoorsy executive's guardian angel on wheels," the Auto Industry Story for "Relics of war reborn, thanks to RP ingenuity," and the Auto Event Story for "Groundwork for future drivers starts with a joystick." She received a total cash prize of P72,000 and trophies.

The contest, now on its third

PDI REPORTER/ A18

TOKYO SUMMIT

GMA, Koizumi set trade partnership

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

TOKYO (via PLDT)—President Macapagal-Arroyo and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi yesterday agreed to start in January formal talks aimed at broadening bilateral economic relations that, among other things, would allow the Philippines to send more caregivers and other health workers to Japan.

"We have always looked to Japan as one of the major engines of growth in the Asia Pacific as well as for our country. We have signed a declaration for a more enduring partnership for the new millennium and this augurs well for Filipinos in the Philippines and in Japan," Ms Macapagal said in a statement.

She and Koizumi held bilateral discussions at the sidelines of the Japan-Asean Commemorative Summit.

A free trade pact with Japan would boost the Philippines' gross domestic product (GDP) by between 1.7 and 3.0 percent, according to a joint study by the Japanese government, industry and academe.

The agreement is a step toward Tokyo's efforts to create its own broad free trade zone with Asean. Japan sealed similar agreements with Malaysia and Thailand earlier in the day at talks held on the sidelines of a two-day Asean-Japan summit that kicked off in Tokyo later on Thursday.

Japan is trying to catch up with China, which is already in talks to create a free trade zone with the whole of the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations by 2010.

"We have agreed that we will begin the formal talks on the economic partnership agreement this coming January," Ms Macapagal told journalists.

Ms Macapagal broached the idea of an economic partnership

GMA/ A19

JAPANESE Empress Michiko meets with President Macapagal at the Imperial Palace in Tokyo on Thursday. AP

100 YEARS EARLY

Women of Malolos wowed Dr. Jose Rizal

By Dr. Pablo S. Trillana, III
Immediate past chair, National Historical Institute; counsel, Philippine Historical Association

WOMEN power is not a 20th-century invention—certainly not in the Philippines.

Toward the end of the 1800s, a group of about 20 young women stood up to the foreign powers and demanded the right to a more purposeful life. Their persistence and eventual success made even the initially skeptical Dr. Jose P. Rizal doff his hat to them in deference.

The year was 1888. The young ladies, who would be referred to in history books as, simply, the Women of Malolos, sought permission from their friar-curate, Fray Felipe Garcia, to open a night school in the wealthy Pariancillo enclave of the town.

Here, they said, at their own expense and in the company of their mothers, they could study the Spanish language. Fray Felipe flatly denied the request.

On this day, we celebrate these women's audacity which, in terms of impact on their offspring's and their country's future, served as nothing less than an act of heroism.

It is likewise good to note that these legendary Women of Malolos were led by one Alberta Uitangcoy, all of 20 years old.

Between the 1870s and the 1890s, the Philippines experienced a surface calm that, unsoiled by any major rebellion, nevertheless betrayed an ugly, simmering underside.

Two terrifying events, in fact, bracketed the period—the execution of Filipino priests Gomez, Burgos and Zamora in 1872, and the bloody revolution of Andres Bonifacio in 1896.

It was the era of *filibusterismo*, when the Spanish clergy's dominance over Filipino life had become invasive, even oppressive. Those who dared question friar authority were quickly branded

WOMEN/ A18

E-mail: pr_news@inquirer.com.ph

Second FRONTPAGE

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern Luzon will experience mostly cloudy skies with rains while Eastern Visayas and the whole of Mindanao will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms becoming widespread over Eastern Mindanao. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to at times cloudy with isolated rainshowers.

COMPILED BY: ARMIN ADINA, PDI RESEARCH/12/12/03 SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila	Partly cloudy	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Partly cloudy
Baguio	Partly cloudy	**Roxas**	Partly cloudy
Tuguegarao	Cloudy with rains	**Cebu**	Cloudy with rains
Laoag	Cloudy with rains	**Tacloban**	Cloudy with rains
Clark Zone	Partly cloudy	**Gen. Santos**	Cloudy with rains
Tagaytay	Partly cloudy	**Zamboanga**	Cloudy with rains
Legazpi	Partly cloudy	**Cagayan de Oro**	Cloudy with rains
Calapan	Partly cloudy	**Davao**	Cloudy with rains

MILF split over peace talks

A POWER struggle in the country's top Muslim separatist group between pragmatists and hardliners accused of supporting foreign "terrorists" could hamper peace talks with the government, Defense Secretary Eduardo Ermita said yesterday.

Malaysia is preparing to host formal talks between Manila and the 11,900-member Moro Islamic Liberation Front early next month.

Manila is pushing for a political settlement to the MILF's 25-year rebellion before the May 2004 presidential election. A deal would lead to the release of millions of dollars' worth of development aid pledged by the United States and other countries to the southern Mindanao region.

Ermita said the MILF leadership is not solidly behind the peace process. He repeated previous charges that some MILF "sub-commanders" give protection and training facilities to at least 31 mostly Indonesian Jemaah Islamiyah militants in the Lanao region of Mindanao.

The JI, blamed for the Bali blasts which killed more than 200 people last year, is alleged to have links to the al-Qaida network of Osama bin Laden, accused of staging the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks in the United States.

"Most of the factions that do not believe in the continuance of the negotiations on the ground, who still think that they can achieve their objective—these are the people who encourage the presence of the JI on the ground," Ermita said.

The foreign militants are training locals, possibly including MILF members, in explosives and avoiding detection, he added.

Technical equipment, including unmanned planes provided by the United States as part of military aid to combat terrorism, have been "very effective" in tracking their activities, Ermita said without elaborating.

A suspected senior JI operative, Taufek Refke, was arrested in Mindanao in October.

The "more practical" MILF leaders, including chief Murad Ebrahim, have realized they could not hope to defeat the government on the battlefield, Ermita said.

However, "there are ranking people in the (MILF) central committee who have second thoughts about actual negotiations," he said.

The differences in opinion had not yet led to a split within the MILF. It remained to be seen if all factions would honor any peace accord signed with Manila, he added.

The MILF has been waging an armed rebellion to set up an Islamic state in Mindanao.

Ermita said Malaysia had played a crucial role to convince the MILF to set aside its armed struggle and engage in peace talks.

At an emergency meeting of cease-fire monitors last week, Manila exacted a written commitment from the MILF that it would deny the JI sanctuary and help the government identify and even arrest JI members.

The two sides agreed to a largely successful cease-fire in July, and an advance team of cease-fire observers from the Malaysian armed forces is set to fly into Mindanao on Monday. *AFP*

MILF warns gov't on drive vs Pentagon

COTABATO CITY—The Moro Islamic Liberation Front yesterday warned that the government manhunt for the Pentagon gang suspected in the latest kidnapping incident here was heating up the military situation in Maguindanao.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu said the tension between the soldiers and rebels was fast building up in Talayan, Talitay and Datu Piang towns because of the military's failure to coordinate its anti-Pentagon operation with the MILF peace panel.

The manhunt is for the abductors of Chinese-Filipino car dealer Norman Sia. Suspected Pentagon gunmen posing as car buyers snatched Sia during a test drive last Monday.

Kabalu said the MILF was worried the hunt for Sia's kidnappers could trigger encounters with the military since MILF rebels were also roaming Maguindanao's remote areas in an effort to find Sia.

MILF chair Murad Ebrahim had ordered his field commanders to help in the rescue of Sia as part of the secessionist group's confidence-building measures toward the peace process, Kabalu said. *Allan A. Nawal, Edwin O. Fernandez, Rosa-May de Guzman and Charlie C. Senase, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

NEWSBRIEFS

Mayor's slay case revived

ACTING Justice Secretary Jose Calida has revived the triple murder case against Iriga City Mayor Emmanuel Alfelor and his seven other companions, saying there was probable cause in the case. Calida's order reversed the decision of a DOJ panel of prosecutors last July to drop the charges due to lack of evidence. "We found probable cause based on the evidence. I believe this is how it should be done—decide on cases based on merits. I'm not afraid to make a decision no matter who gets hurt," Calida said. Alfelor was tagged in the murder of Department of Trade and Industry district officer Reynaldo Licup, his driver Geoffrey Remodo and car mechanic Rommel Barillos in Baao, Camarines Sur on Dec. 2, 2002. A DOJ panel of prosecutors had dismissed the case on July 29 for lack of evidence. *Philip Tubeza*

Namfrel set to mobilize

FINALLY accredited as the citizen's arm tasked to conduct a vote count in the 2004 polls, the National Movement for Free Elections yesterday said it will start off its partnership with the Commission on Elections with a campaign to verify the voters' lists and inform voters where they can vote. Namfrel chair Jose Concepcion Jr. said one of the organization's first projects will be to mobilize its chapters, coordinate with election officers and try to acquire the voters' lists at the municipal level. Once in possession of the lists, Namfrel volunteers will go out and inform voters where they can vote. *Martin P. Marfil*

No permit? No problem

BAYAN Muna Party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo yesterday filed a bill seeking to repeal the "No permit, no rally" rule, which the police usually invoke in dispersing protesters. House Bill 6613, to be known as the "Exuberant Expression Act of 2003," requires no permit for any person or persons to organize and conduct protest actions in public places. It seeks to repeal Batas Pambansa 880, which was enacted during the Marcos regime. *Cynthia D. Balana*

Pardon for Pinoys sought

THE PHILIPPINES has asked Saudi Arabia to pardon 100 Filipino workers jailed for various offenses in the kingdom, Foreign Secretary Blas Ople said yesterday. Ople asked the Philippine embassy in Riyadh to forward the petition. "We are hoping to capitalize on the goodwill and strong ties forged over the years between the Philippines and the Royal Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to secure the release of our citizens held in Saudi jails," Ople said in a written statement. He did not specify the offenses of the 100 detained Filipinos. *AFP*

3 MILF rebs slain

ZAMBOANGA CITY—Three Moro Islamic Liberation Front rebels were killed and four soldiers wounded in a gunbattle in Sirawai town in Zamboanga del Sur, the military said yesterday. The troops were patrolling a village near Sirawai Wednesday when they were attacked by 20 men believed to be MILF members, a military report said. *AFP*

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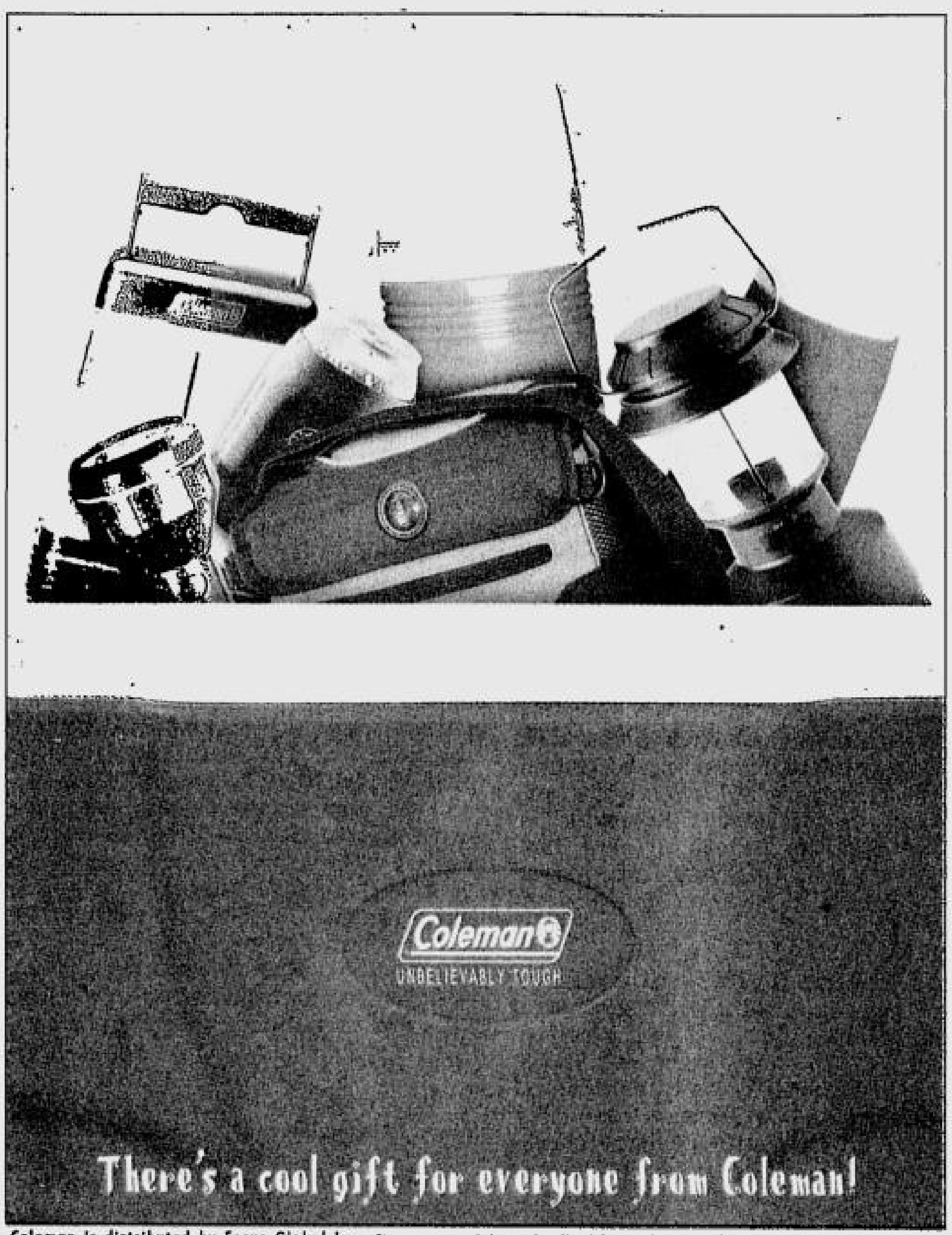
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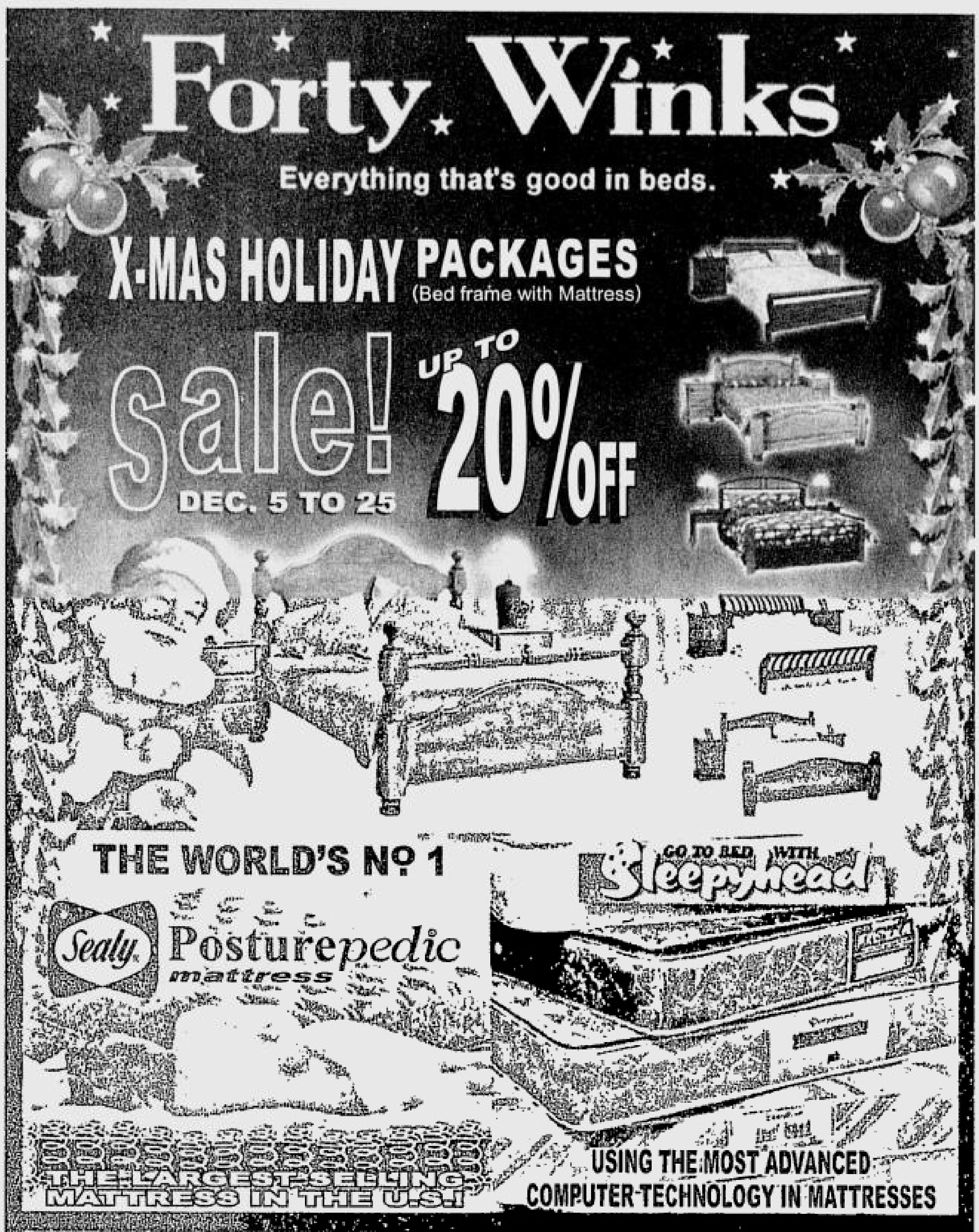
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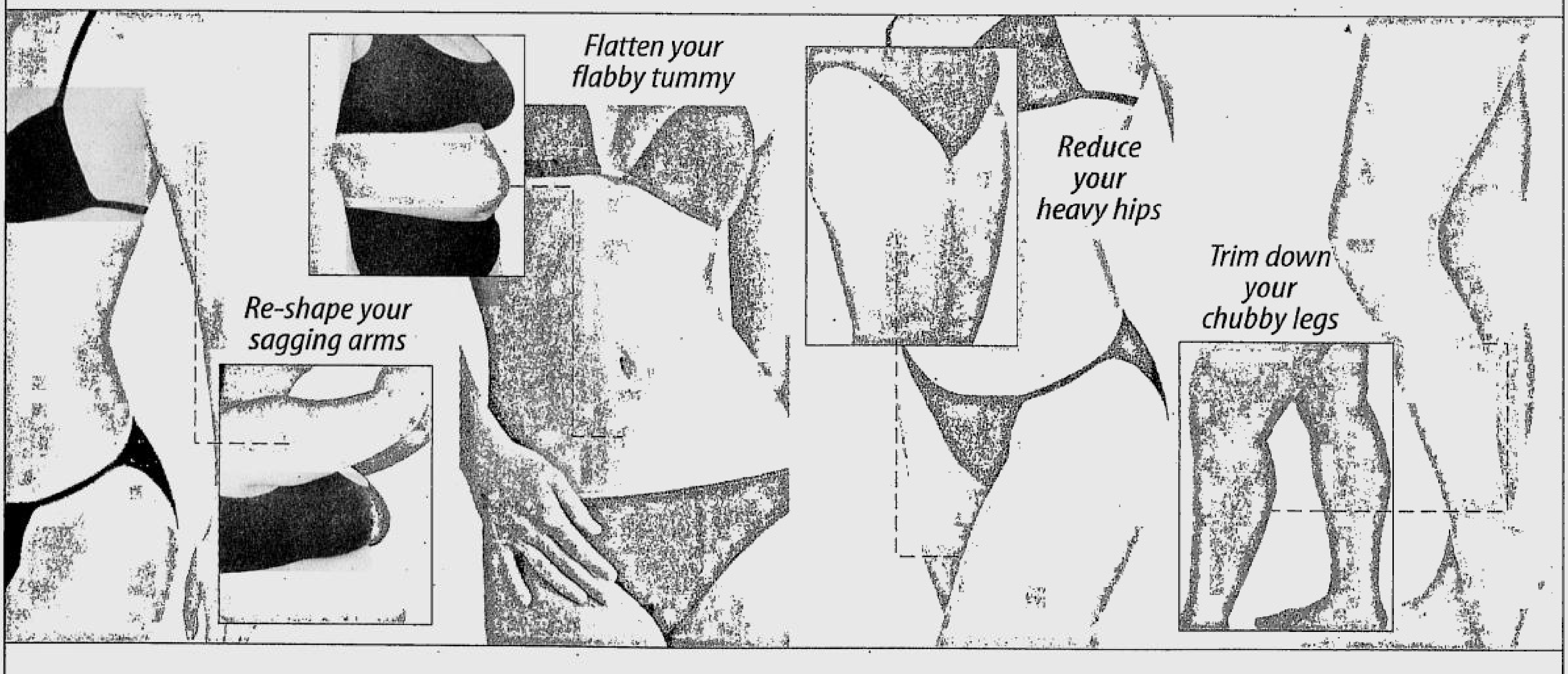
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Palace: Noli to eat into FPJ votes

From page A1

"There are many interpretations," Defensor said. "It may also be that [businessmen] feel that Senator De Castro would bring down the votes of Mr. Poe. So if Noli will get votes from FPJ, then it would increase the [President's chances at the polls]."

But Vivian Yuchengco, president of the Philippine Association of Brokers and Dealers and former chair of the Philippine Stock Exchange, denied that the business community was pushing for a De Castro candidacy.

"The business sector is scared not only of an FPJ but also of a De Castro becoming president," she said.

Yuchengco said that while most business leaders were not eager to disclose their preference from among the contenders, many of them wanted someone with extensive experience in running the government in order not to imperil the economy.

She also said these business leaders viewed Ms Macapagal as a strong contender and were convinced that keeping her as President was a better option.

1M signatures

Businessman Louie Biraogo, head of the Kabayan for President Movement, told the INQUIRER that it had gathered more than one million signatures from all over the country in its campaign to convince De Castro to run.

This is more than one-third of the KPM target of three million signatures, he said in a phone interview.

"We have yet to collate the signatures because of our decentralized strategy, but judging by the reports we have received from [KPM community and organization signing centers], the number of signatures we have is now easily beyond the one-million mark," Biraogo said.

The KPM launched its signature campaign—one million each from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao—barely two weeks ago.

Not De Castro

But Yuchengco said that while businessmen were apprehensive of the kind of government that would result under a politically inexperienced Poe, they were equally not confident about the capability of De Castro, a former newscaster of ABS-CBN known as Kabayan.

Yuchengco also said she supported Ms Macapagal's bid for another term because ensuring a continuity of economic programs would benefit the economy.

"Despite all the things happening around, she is still able to manage the economy well," Yuchengco said. "She was able to improve security after the capture of [Abu Sayyaf leader] Commander Robot and [the slain Indonesian bomber Fathur Rohman] Al Ghozi."

Winning man

To bolster the theory that a De Castro candidacy would be advantageous to Ms Macapagal, the ranking government official said De Castro would take votes away from Poe and Roco, front-runners in the latest surveys of Pulse Asia and Social Weather Stations.

If De Castro agrees to run with Ms Macapagal, it will also be advantageous to her because she will be assured that her running mate is going to win, the official said.

"That is the best for Gloria because that assures her of a winning vice president," he said. "Then she can concentrate on the presidency."

The official also said De Castro would beat Sen. Loren Legarda, also a former ABS-CBN talent, in the presidential race because of his supposed large following among the lower classes.

Legarda herself sees nothing wrong in De Castro's possible run.

"The more candidates to choose from, the better for our people," Legarda told reporters yesterday in Vigan. "The more brands competing with each other, the better for the consumers."

Legarda is still unsure of what step to take.

"I cannot deny it—all the presidential candidates have asked me [to be their running mate]," she said. "I am currently evaluating whether I must run for vice [president], and if I do, with whom. I will make the decision soon. It's not an easy decision."

More intelligent

One of the top businessmen urging De Castro to run cited two reasons for their stance: First, their perception that he is the only one to beat Poe, and "two, he is more intelligent than FPJ."

"What's more, we don't like the people around [Poe]," the businessman said. He mentioned Senate Minority Leader Vicente Sotto III, the actor's spokesperson, and Sen. Edgardo Angara, president of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino.

The businessman said they actually preferred a Macapagal victory. But he pointed out that the President could not beat Poe.

He said that should Poe pull out of the race, he would not be "as aggressive" in urging De Castro to run.

He added that he would like De Castro to run for vice president.

No specific candidate

But Miguel Varela, chair of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, said his group was not aware of any efforts by the business sector to push De Castro to run for president in order to prevent a Poe victory.

He said that the PCCI was not supporting a specific candidate and that its policy was to encourage candidates to present their program of government so that the people would be able to vote wisely.

Donald Dee, president of the Employers Confederation of the Philippines, voiced a similar comment.

"Our posture is not to be partisan," Dee said. "Our main commitment is that once a candidate is identified, we would like to know his or her program."

Groundswell

Isko Katibayan, also of the KPM, said there was a "groundswell" of support for De Castro especially at the grass-roots.

"The response to the signature campaign in Mindanao is quite encouraging," Katibayan told the INQUIRER in a phone interview. "People are flocking to the signing booths and they really want Kabayan to run for president."

Biraogo said the KPM welcomed the reported support of businessmen for De Castro's candidacy. But he cautioned business groups against trying to influence the latter if he becomes president.

According to Katibayan, the KPM is made up of individuals, people's organizations, and small- and medium-scale businessmen.

Katibayan expressed the group's confidence that by virtue of the public influence honed by his 20 years as a media professional, De Castro would be the "healing and unifying president" needed by the country.

Palace ploy

In the opinion of Rep. Didagen Dilangalen (Partido ng Masang Pilipino, Maguindanao), De Castro's prospective candidacy is a Malacañang ploy.

"The Palace itself is pushing De Castro to run in order to cannibalize the votes of FPJ," said Dilangalen, whose party is affiliated with the pro-Poe Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino. *With reports from Carlito Pablo and Margie Quimpo-Espino in Manila; Leoncio Balbin Jr. and Cristina Arzadon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Pulse Asia: Maceda report . . .

From page A1

Pulse Asia survey which claimed that actor Fernando Poe Jr. was leading the presidential race.

Mike Defensor, also the housing secretary, said Pulse Asia Inc. denied that it had such a survey showing Poe leading with 44 percent, former Sen. Raul Roco with 16 percent and Ms Macapagal with 14 percent.

"This is in response to the article of Mr. Ernesto M. Maceda in Malaya ... that claims 'The latest Pulse Asia survey results show FPJ soaring to the top with a 44-percent rating,'" Pulse Asia Inc. executive director Ana Maria L. Tabunda said in a disclaimer.

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"We would like to inform the public that Pulse Asia Inc. does not have any such survey result showing Mr. Poe with a rating of 44 percent. The claim of Mr. Maceda about the supposed survey is untrue," Tabunda said.

Maceda, chair emeritus of the Nationalist People's Coalition who is supporting Poe, also claimed in a dzBB interview that he had an advanced copy of that Pulse Asia survey.

In his column, Maceda said: "Forty-four percent means a landslide. Once FPJ starts visiting the cities and provinces, expect that figure to go higher.

Not dare cheat

"No Comelec commissioner or registrar will dare cheat a shoo-in candidate. They will be the first to be lynched by an irate mob if they do that," he said.

Although Maceda did not mention the ratings obtained by Roco, Ms Macapagal and opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson, Makati Rep. Teodoro Locsin Jr. did in his column in another paper. But Locsin did not mention Pulse Asia as the source of his data. He placed the rating of Lacson at 9 percent.

"We are saddened by this development because early in the game the opposition is already utilizing techniques and propaganda to deceive the public," Defensor said at a briefing.

"Although as we said we are not so concerned about surveys, we feel that by lying and by misinforming the public (the opposition is) already showing the kind of campaign they are willing to undertake for the coming elections," he said.

He noted that the opposition was also engaged in internal bickering and could not forge a united front and present a common candidate.

Misleading

Heherson Alvarez, spokesperson for the ruling Lakas-CMD, also issued a statement alerting the public to the false Pulse Asia survey.

"This is meant to mislead the people and obtain public support for this candidate by making him look formidable in the surveys," Alvarez said.

"This hoax must be exposed. This lie does not only mislead the public but is a clear threat to clean, orderly and honest elections," he said.

Alvarez said it was unfortunate that "certain parties are resorting to tainted means to project their candidate."

Belittled

Presidential Chief of Staff Rigoberto Tiglao also denied that there was a Malacañang in-house survey in which an opposition candidate was leading.

"We have not conducted any such survey. There is no truth to that claim," Tiglao said.

Defensor for his part called on the opposition "to elevate the level of debate and discussion to programs, principles and performance record as well as the leadership qualities of candidates, and not dwell on politics of lies and mudslinging."

Ping still wants FPJ as his VP...

TARLAC CITY—Sen. Panfilo Lacson said he is still hopeful that the opposition will field a common presidential candidate for the 2004 elections.

Lacson, in a visit here on Thursday, told the INQUIRER that a "Ping-FPJ (Fernando Poe Jr.)" tandem is very much possible.

Lacson said he was banking on Poe's earlier statement that he is willing to give way.

The senator also said he and Poe, during their earlier discussions, would respect the opposition coalition's presidential choice provided the selection process was fair.

"I do not know what he meant by giving way, but the short period that I have known FPJ, I found him sincere. He is a good man," Lacson said.

He said despite criticisms about Poe's academic background, he would still be confident with Poe as his running mate.

"A college or academic diploma doesn't make one intelligent; intelligence is not on a piece of paper. It is enough that one is street smart and then learn the ropes along the way," Lacson said.

Speaking before a meeting of Rotary Club members here, Lacson, if elected, promised to make the "country turn around in 360 days."

He also made strong commitments to quell what he perceives as major issues in the country: rising crime, the drug menace, widespread corruption, health care and population manag ement, judicial reforms and education. *Jo Clemente, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

...But Gringo wants to be VP of FPJ

By Christine O. Avendaño

SEN. GREGORIO "Gringo" Honasan would like to be vice president in a Fernando Poe Jr. presidency.

Honasan, who had earlier expressed interest in the presidency himself, said yesterday he had made known to the newly formed Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino his availability to be Poe's running mate in 2004.

The opposition coalition KNP on Wednesday picked Poe to be its standard-bearer in the May polls.

In a news conference, Honasan also defended the coalition's selection process which—rather than unite the opposition—caused a rift between Poe supporters and those for Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

"We believe a process of selection has been followed and the choice for standard-bearer is the best candidate at this time for national unity and principled reconciliation," he said.

"It was in this spirit," Honasan added, that he "submit(ted)" his name to be Poe's running mate to the KNP.

He said the KNP had "agreed in principle" to also allow a selection process for Poe's running mate.

Sen. Loren Legarda and former Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago were among the names being bandied about as opposition vice presidential candidate.

The LDP has been split by the rift between Poe and Lacson backers. The faction led by Makati City Rep. Agapito "Butz" Aquino nominated Lacson as the LDP standard-bearer, while the group led by party president Sen. Edgardo Angara proclaimed Poe as the KNP's bet. *With Russell Arador, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

DOJ standoff ends; Calida is acting chief

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE STANDOFF between two justice undersecretaries, Ma. Merceditas Gutierrez and Jose Calida, ended yesterday after Malacañang ruled that Calida was the rightful acting Secretary of Justice.

But the reconciliation brought out a startling revelation: Calida's wife had been kidnapped but Calida said he did not report it after she was returned unharmed.

"For the DOJ, we are one. This is to show the public that what we had was a miscommunication," said Gutierrez after shaking hands with Calida in front of photographers in her office.

The department found itself with two acting secretaries when Justice Secretary Simeon Datumanong, who left the country last week to attend a conference in Mexico, issued a department order designating Calida as acting secretary while Malacañang approved an earlier Datumanong order giving the post to Gutierrez.

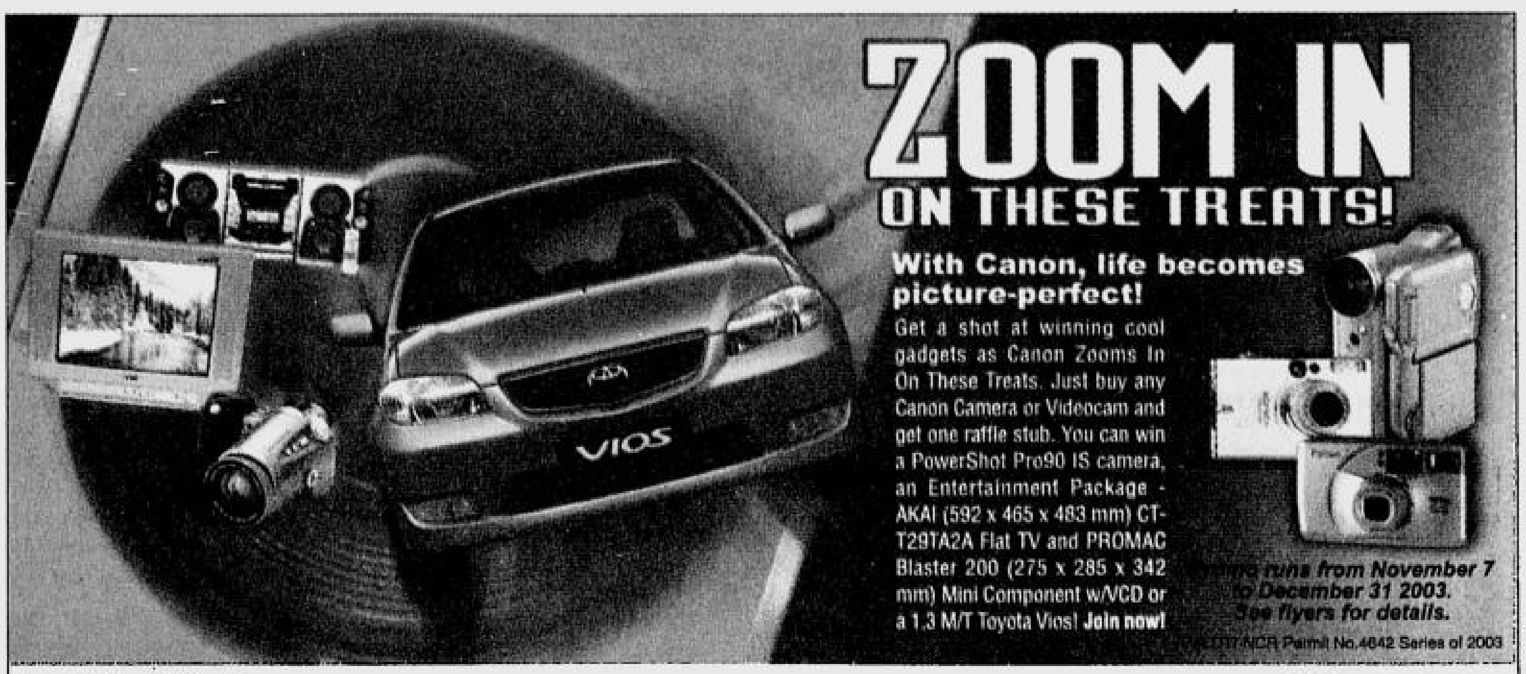
The confusion had partisans pitting the two undersecretaries against each other to the extent that a white paper against Calida was circulated in the department.

Calida held a press conference yesterday at the Office of the Secretary thanking Datumanong and President Macapagal Arroyo for clarifying that he was the acting secretary and to condemn the white paper which he said contained "black propaganda and slanderous matters" against him.

It was while denying the accusation in the white paper that he had too many bodyguards that Calida mentioned that his wife had been kidnapped.

"I have bodyguards because I have received death threats. I think you are all aware of that. And as the President announced during the Jesus is Lord church celebration, my wife was even kidnapped so I need to protect myself and my family," said Calida, who is a JIL member.

Calida declined to give further details about the kidnapping because he said his wife was released unharmed.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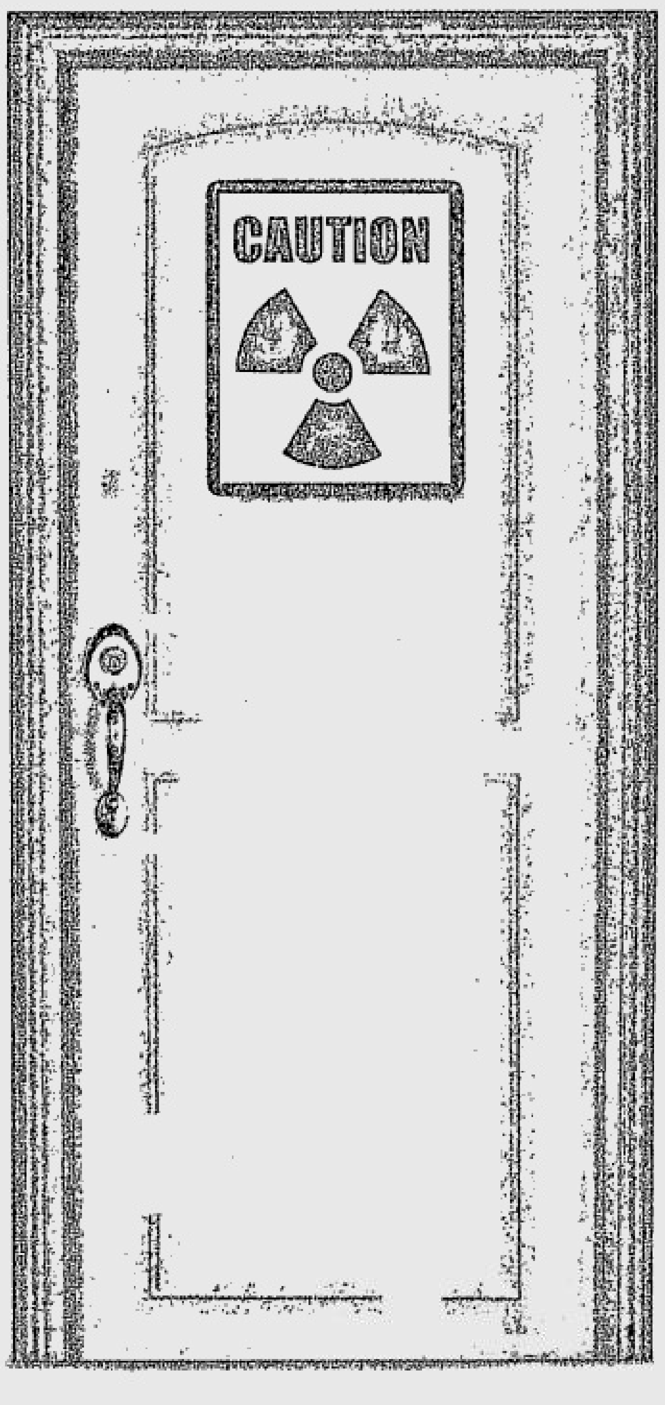

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SGV head eyed for DTI post

TOKYO (via PLDT)—Malacañang wants to tap the head of the country's biggest accounting firm, SGV & Co. chair Cesar Purisima, to replace Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel A. Roxas II who resigned Wednesday from office to run for office.

A top Malacañang official, who declined to be identified, said Purisima was at the top of the short list of candidates being considered as the next Trade and Industry Secretary.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye declined to bare the short list of candidates.

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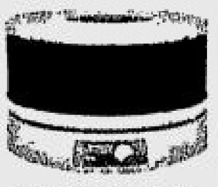

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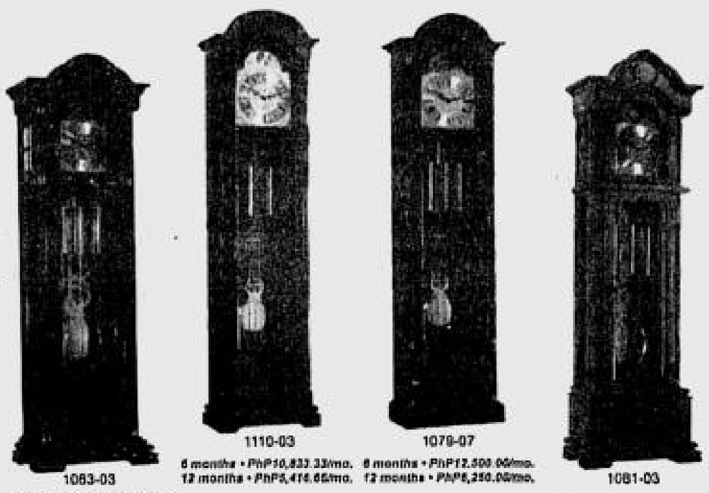

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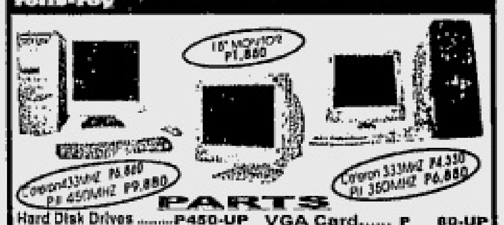

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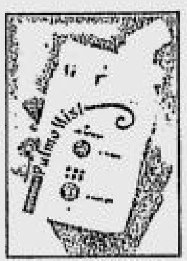

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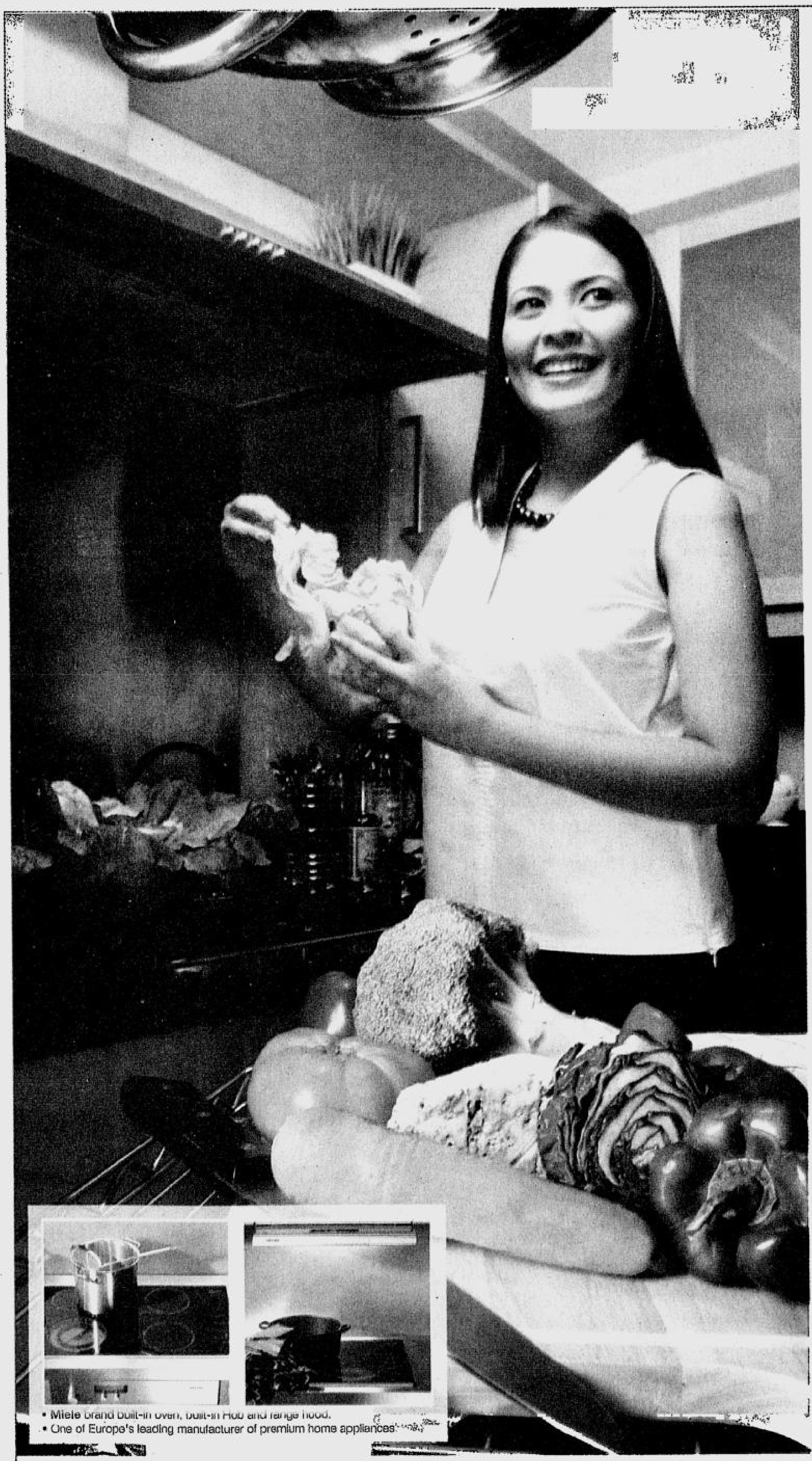
Seven. Seek Ye First The Kingdom Of God is not a Christmas song



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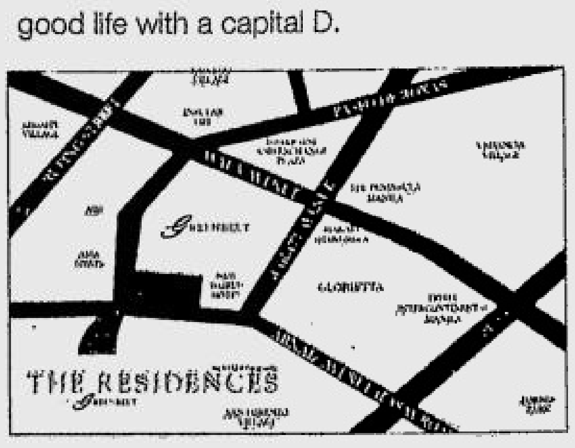

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The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

A third of US-trained Iraq soldiers quit

WASHINGTON—Efforts to create a new Iraqi Army to help take over the country's security have suffered a setback with the resignations of a third of the soldiers trained so far, Pentagon officials say.

Touted as a key to Iraq's future, the Army's first 700-man battalion lost some 250 men over recent weeks as they were preparing to begin operations this month, officials said Wednesday.

"We are aware that a third . . . has apparently resigned and we are looking into that in order to ensure that we can recruit and retain high-quality people for a new Iraqi army," said Lt. Col. James Cassella, a Pentagon spokesperson.

It was unclear exactly why they abandoned their new jobs, though some had complained that the starting salary—$60 a month for privates—was too low, officials said. Others may have feared threats from insurgents who have targeted Iraqis cooperating with occupation authorities, a Pentagon official said.

It also was unclear whether the soldiers who remained would be sent out for duty, officials said.

The battalion was highly celebrated when the newly retrained soldiers, marching to the beat of a US Army band, completed a nine-week basic training course in early October. The graduates, including 65 officers, were to be the core "of an army that will defend its country and not oppress it," Iraq's American administrator, L. Paul Bremer, said at the ceremony.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and other officials have repeatedly trumpeted the growth of Iraqi security forces—announcing breakneck speed in recruiting and training.

"Across the country, Iraqi security forces—now number close to 160,000—are assuming more responsibility for the security of their country," Rumsfeld said at a Pentagon press conference on Tuesday. *AP*

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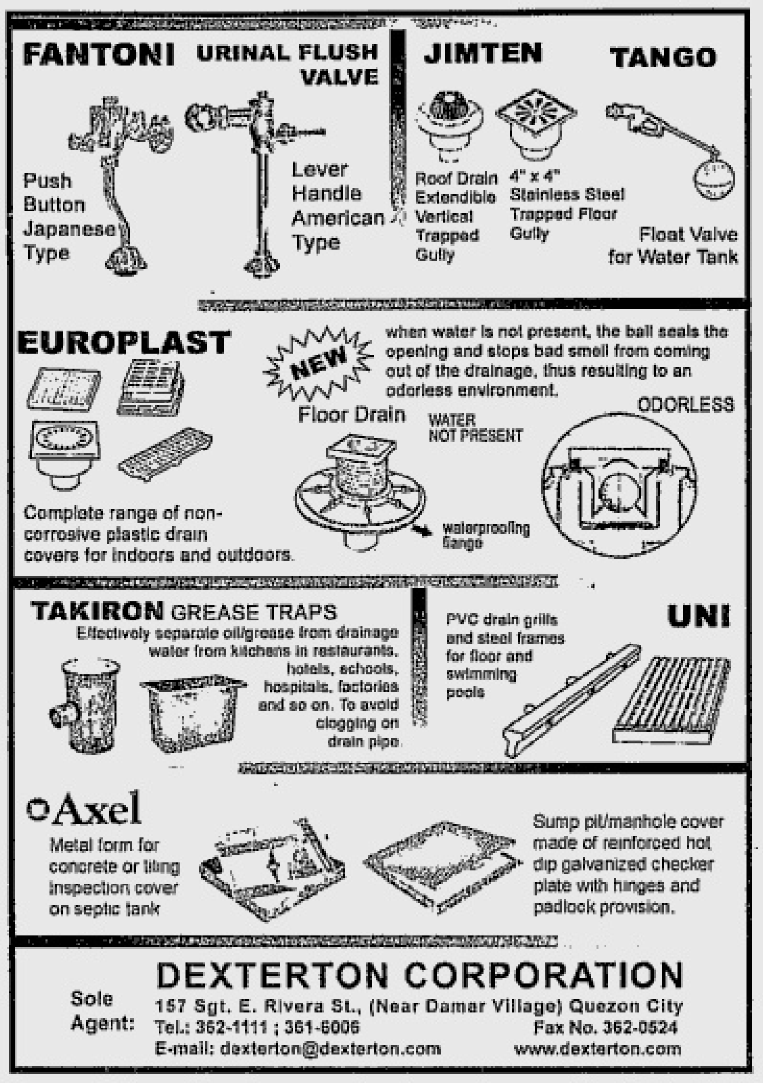
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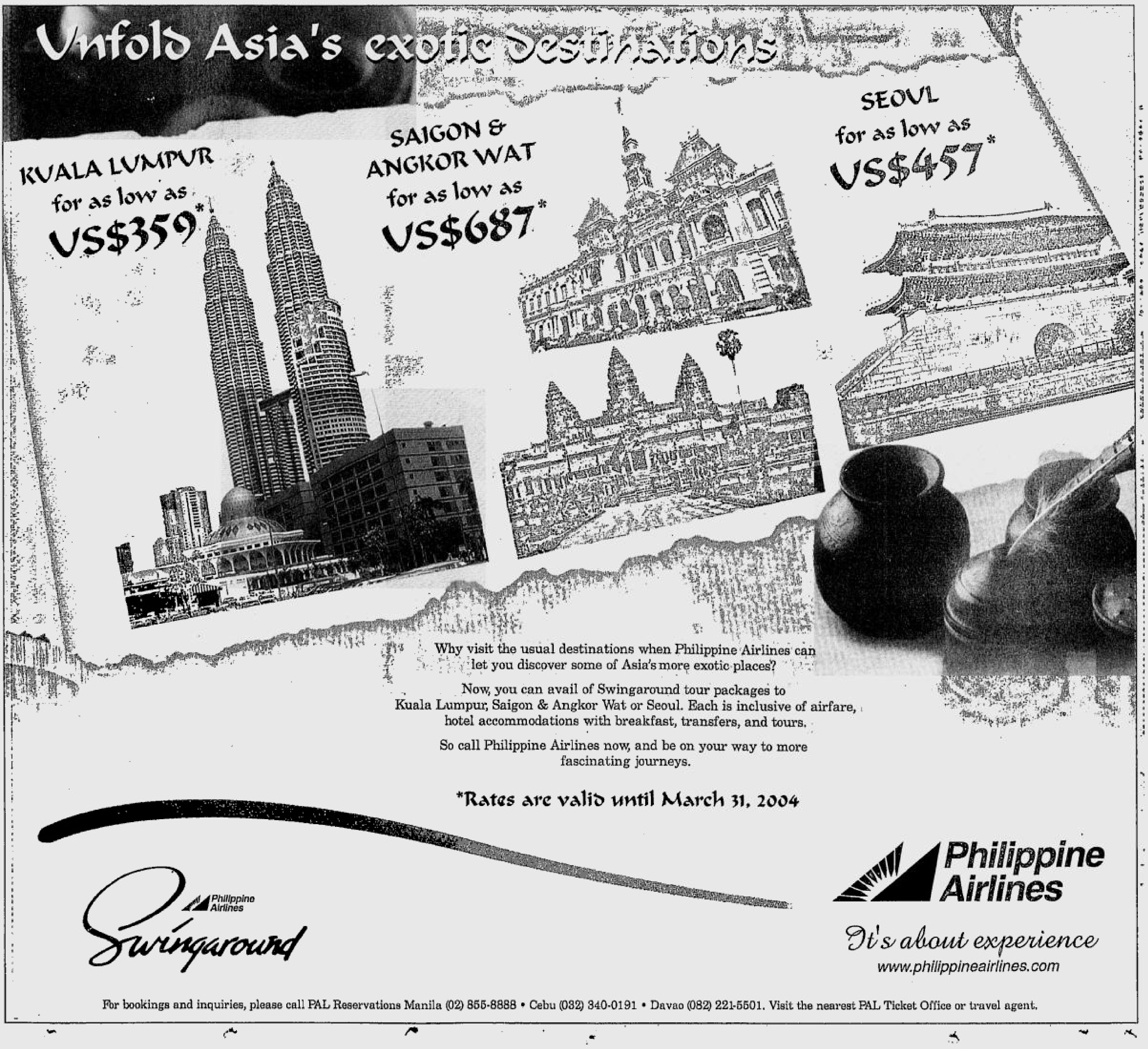
WORLDBRIEFS

Chen sticks with veep

TAIPEI—Taiwan's leader picked outspoken Vice President Annette Lu as his running mate in the March 20 election on Thursday, ending months of speculation and political wrangling. President Chen Shui-bian decided to stick with Lu even though many of his party's most popular lawmakers have petitioned him to seriously consider another candidate. Chen praised Lu's negotiating skills, her education and the assistance she has given him the past four years before saying, "I officially nominate my colleague Annette Lu as my vice presidential candidate." In her acceptance speech, the 59-year-old Lu said, "Looking at the future we must realize that a special era has arrived . . . and a special era needs special leaders." *AP*

Reunited with family

PHNOM PENH—A boy who was left with a Cambodian gasoline vendor as collateral for three liters (0.8 gallon) of gasoline earlier this year has been reunited with his family, a police officer said Thursday. Ron Dy, 9, was handed over to his uncle, Roeun Eng, on Monday after gasoline seller Chim Thy appealed to the boy's parents through the media, said Ly Lim, a police chief in Kampong Thom province, 130 km north of the capital, Phnom Penh. Chim Thy, 70, had been caring for Ron Dy in Kampong Thom since February, when a man who claimed to be the boy's uncle said he couldn't pay for the fuel and left the boy as collateral while he went to get money. However, the man—who identified himself only as Vy—never returned and media earlier this month quoted Chim Thy as saying she wanted Ron Dy's relatives to pick him up. Roeun Eng, 33, said Vy wasn't the boy's uncle but had offered to give him a ride on his motorcycle. It wasn't clear why Chim Thy waited 10 months before appealing to Ron Dy's family to claim the boy. *AP*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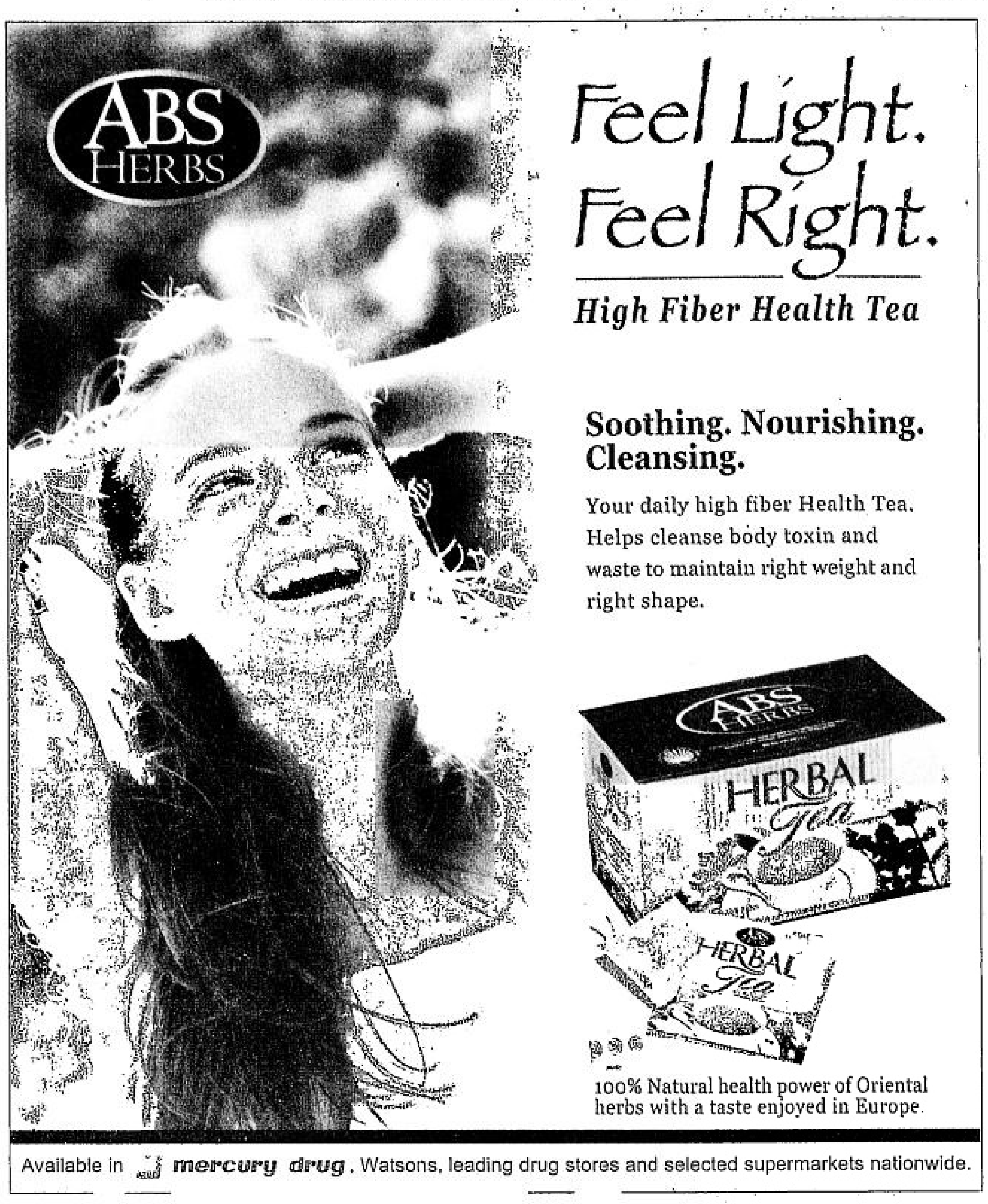

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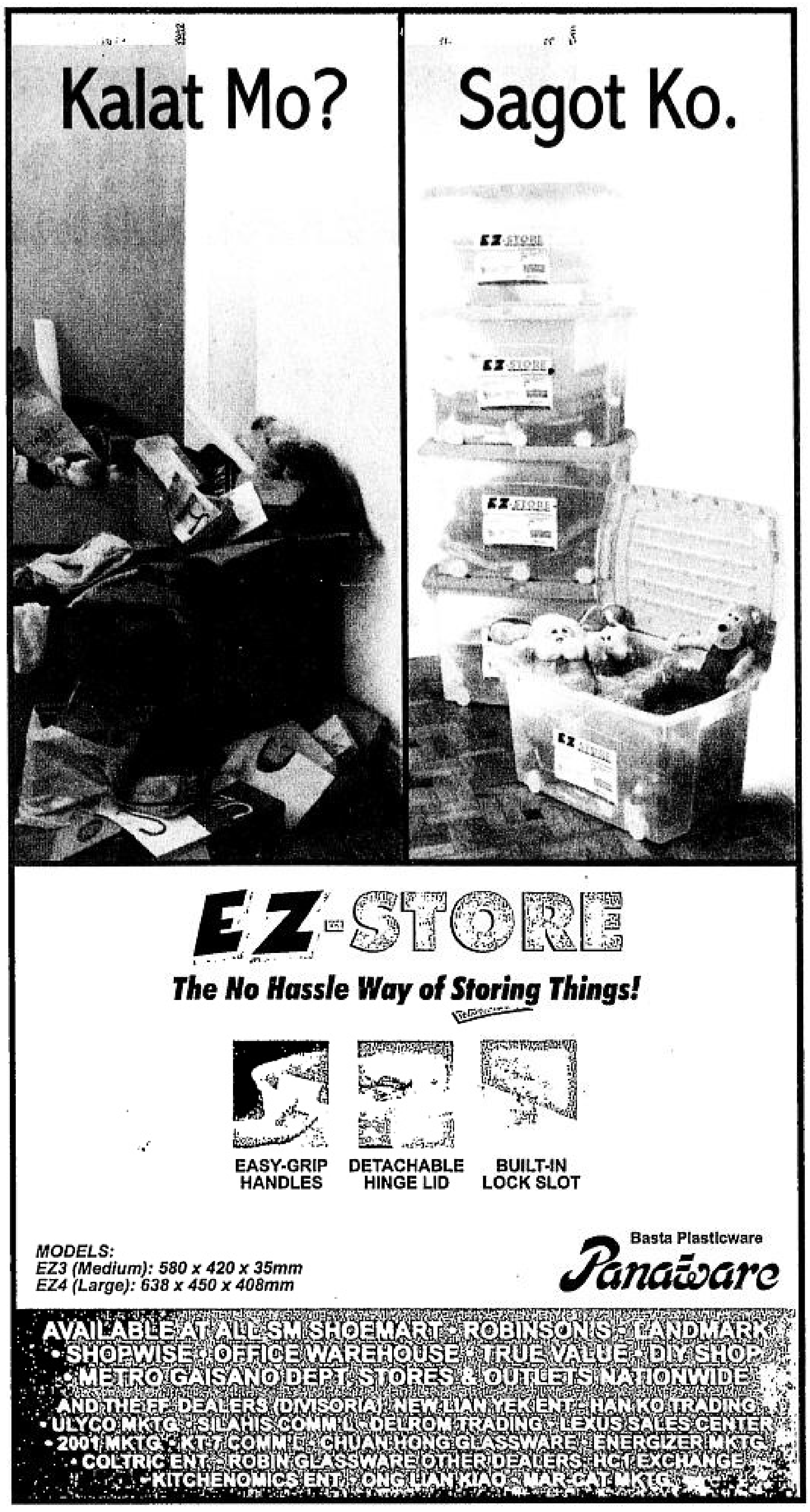

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US ban on critics reopens wounds

BRUSSELS — Russia suggested it would not restructure Iraq's debt. Canada threatened to stop sending aid to Baghdad. The European Union said it would study whether global trade rules had been violated.

Across Europe, response was swift and angry Wednesday to the US order barring firms based in important allied countries —opponents of the Iraq war—from bidding on Iraqi reconstruction projects.

Germany, another leading opponent of the war, called the decision "unacceptable," and government spokesperson Bela Anda said it went against "a spirit of looking to the future together and not to the past."

Critics said the policy could discourage countries from helping to rebuild Iraq and complicate American efforts to restructure Iraq's estimated $125 billion debt, much of it owed to France, Germany, Russia and other nations whose companies were excluded under the Pentagon directive.

French President Jacques Chirac, German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and Russian President Vladimir Putin all raised the contracting issue during previously scheduled telephone calls with President George W. Bush on Wednesday, White House spokesperson Sean McCormack said.

Bush "indicated he'd keep lines of communication open," McCormack said—but other White House officials made it clear the administration had no intention of reconsidering the policy.

The White House says countries wanting a share of the $18.6 billion in reconstruction contracts in the 2004 US budget must participate militarily in the postwar effort. *AP*

Infidelity on rise in Germany

BERLIN—Almost every second German cheats on or has cheated on their partner, according to a new survey published on Wednesday.

A November survey of 1,059 men and women aged between 20 and 60 by the Hamburg-based Gewis research institute for "Stern" magazine showed 51 percent of men and 43 percent of women said they had cheated at least once on their partner.

Of the confessed cheats, some 61 percent of women and 47 percent of men said their transgressions came from a lack of love or interest shown by their partner.

Gewis head Werner Habermehl said increased personal freedom and the illusion of the perfect partner propounded by films and the media were fueling the wave of sexual infidelity.

"People's demands of their partners are rising continually which means they are on the lookout for something better more than ever before—and so they try more partners out," he said. *Reuters*

65M girls miss out on schooling

GENEVA—Some 65 million girls worldwide are kept out of school, increasing the risks that they will suffer from extreme poverty, die in childbirth or from AIDS, and pass those dangers from generation to generation, the UN children's fund said Thursday.

Unicef Executive Director Carol Bellamy urged that this gender gap be closed.

"We believe that the failure to invest in girls' education puts in jeopardy more development goals than any other single action that could take place," she said in an interview.

In its annual State of the World's Children report, Unicef said 121 million children around the world were out of school, of whom the majority are girls.

"When a girl is without the knowledge and life skills that school can provide, there are immediate and long-term effects; she is exposed to many more risks than her educated counterparts and the consequences are bequeathed to the next generation," the study said.

The UN's "millennium goals" on poverty reduction commit the world to parity for boys and girls in primary education by 2005, but most specialists acknowledge that this will be impossible to achieve.

"The single largest obstacle to girls going to school is school fees, even though in many places it costs almost as much to collect them as is collected," Bellamy said. "We strongly urge the abolition of school fees."

When poor families are forced to make a choice, they decide to pay for the education of their sons. That doesn't mean they don't want their daughters to be educated as well, she said.

Bellamy gave the example of Kenya, where school attendance has shot up by at least 1.2 million since primary school fees were abolished at the beginning of this year.

Throughout Africa, Unicef said, a push to get girls into school has seen big improvements. Over five years, school enrollment rates for girls rose by 15 percent in Guinea, 12 percent in Senegal and 9 percent in Benin.

In the most striking example, the number of girls enrolled in first grade in the central African country of Chad quadrupled in two years, while the dropout rate decreased from 22 percent to 9 percent, and the number of female teachers rose from 36 to 787.

Despite the successes, however, at the current rate of funding it is estimated that it will take until 2129 to achieve universal primary education in sub-Saharan Africa, Unicef says.

Unicef said campaigns to educate girls also benefited boys because it was rare for education to be offered to girls alone. A campaign on boys' education might not benefit girls, however.

The 147-page study said that universal education had widely been considered a luxury rather than a basic human right.

It said countries and donors had often considered that boosting economic performance would lead to social gains like schooling for girls but in fact the reverse was true—improving social welfare led to economic progress.

But educating girls in particular also has wider social benefits, Bellamy said.

"You educate a boy, you educate the man. You educate a girl, you educate the community and the family," she said.

"A girl gets an education and she is more likely to be healthy. Her children are less likely to die before the age of 5. She is more likely to make choices about her life. It doesn't make it all go away, but she becomes more of a functioning person in society."

Because educated girls and women better understand health issues, every extra year of education reduces the number of women who die in childbirth by two per thousand, the study added. *AP*

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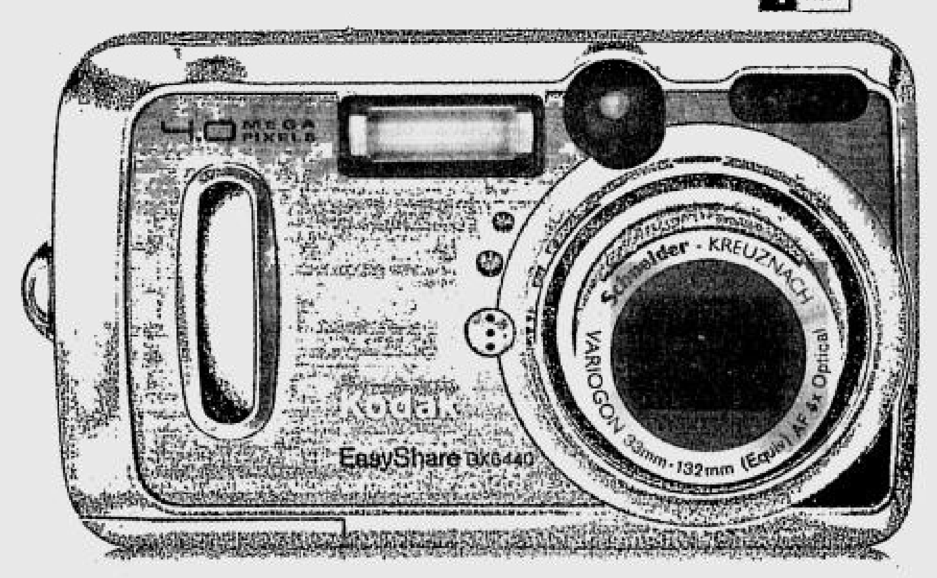

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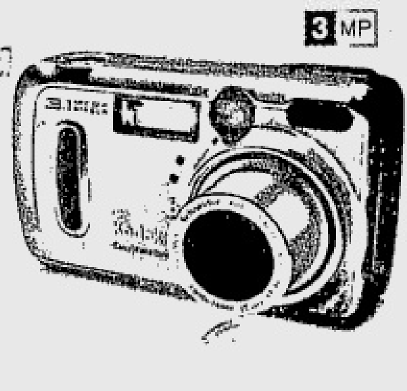

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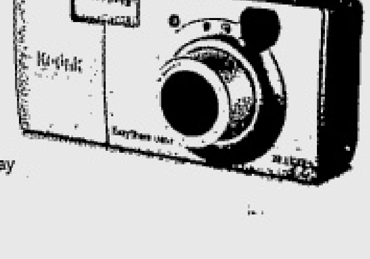

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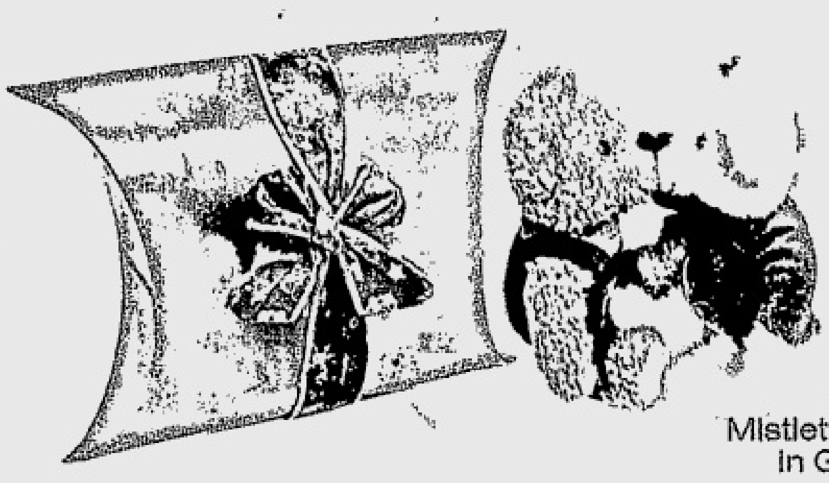
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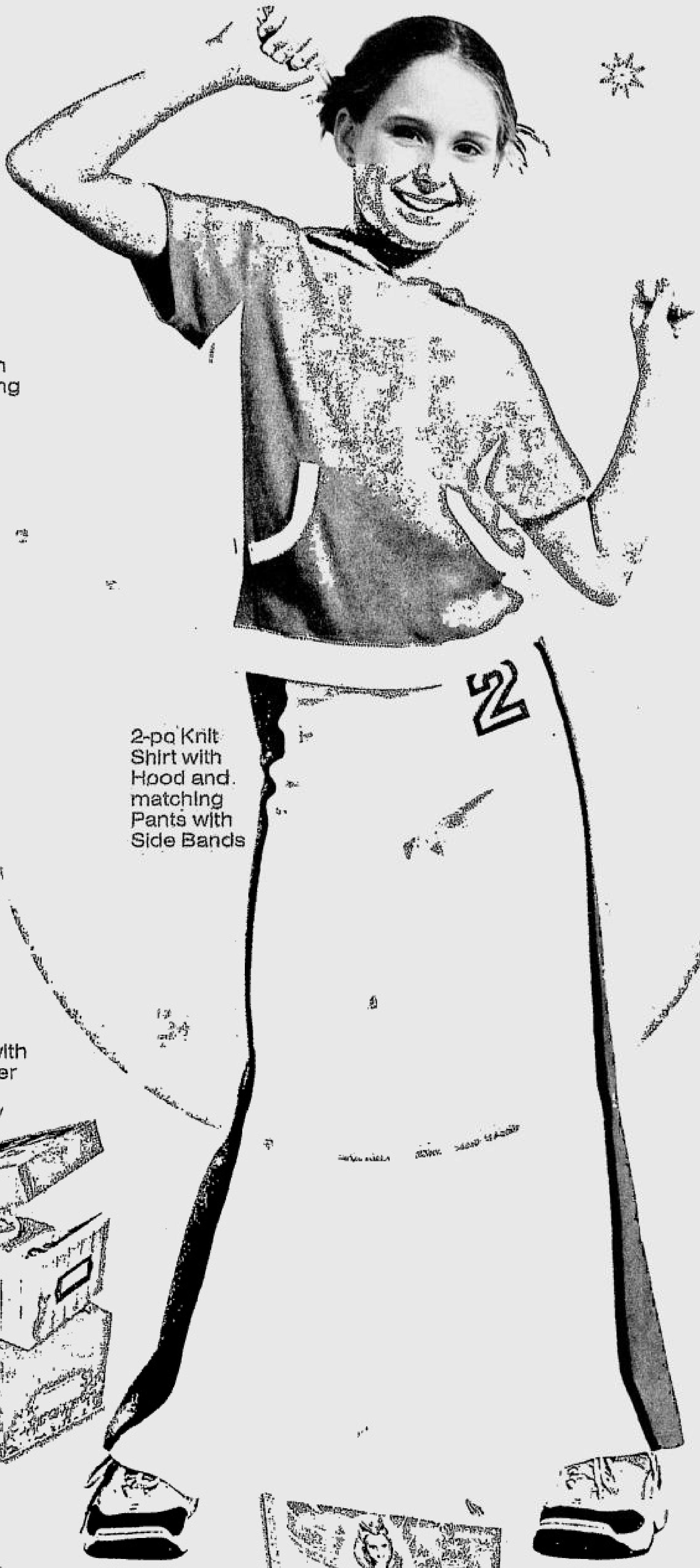
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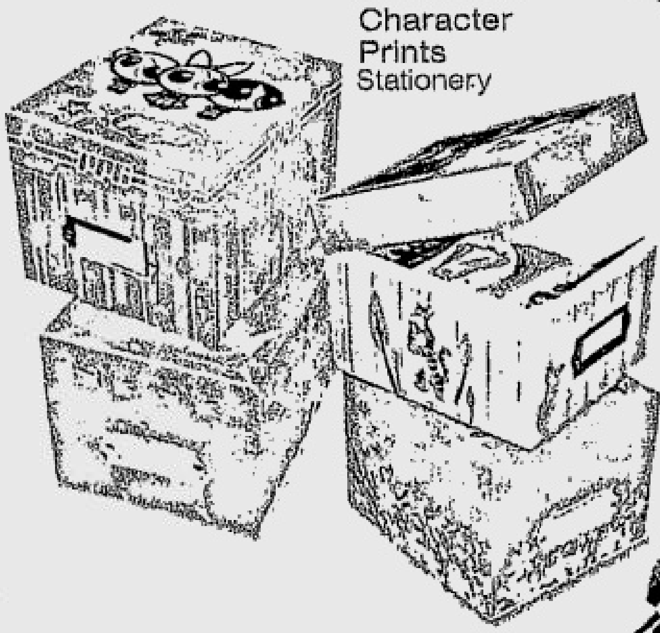
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Peas in a pod

EDITORIAL

IF some businessmen could have their way, the 2004 presidential election would be a contest between someone who can read from a script and one who can act according to script. Spooked by the prospect of having another actor in Malacañang, many businessmen are pushing Sen. Noli de Castro to join the presidential derby, believing the ABS-CBN news reader has the best chance of beating the action star Fernando Poe Jr., a *compadre* of the disgraced former president, Joseph Estrada.

The Philippine ambassador to the Court of St. James, Edgardo Espiritu, said businessmen have been urging him to help persuade De Castro to run for president. "The perception of many businessmen, including bankers and accountants, is that Noli is the only one who can beat FPJ," said Espiritu, a former banker and finance secretary.

That conclusion, of course, seems to be borne out by—or derived from—results of the latest survey done by the Social Weather Stations, showing Poe and De Castro running neck-and-neck in terms of voter preference last month, with 25 percent and 24 percent, respectively. In fact, until Poe began showing some interest in joining the contest, De Castro was leading the pack of potential candidates by a wide margin, although another survey done in November by Pulse Asia showed him trailing President Macapagal-Arroyo in a wide-open contest where seven candidates are running. In the latter survey, Ms Macapagal got 24 percent while De Castro had 21 percent, in a virtual tie with former Education Secretary Raul Roco, with 20 percent, and Poe, with 19 percent.

De Castro's popularity and vote-getting ability cannot be doubted. He has demonstrated this by topping the 2001 senatorial elections and getting the biggest number of votes cast for any candidate in the nation's history.

But why would businessmen think he would make a better president than Poe, as Espiritu implied? As far as qualifications go, De Castro's only advantage over Poe is that he has a college degree while Poe is a high school dropout, plus the fact that he has been a senator for two and a half years. (Poe actually speaks better English than De Castro who is hard put to string together three grammatical sentences in the language of international politics and business.) But if De Castro's totally unremarkable performance in the Senate can be used as a gauge, it's difficult to see how much better the nation would be under his stewardship than under a Poe presidency. Thus, a De Castro-Poe presidential contest would be a choice between one who has quickly shown himself to be unequal to the demands of public office and another whose performance has not been tested at all.

The paucity of De Castro's credentials for the highest office was unwittingly underscored by Espiritu himself when he tried to explain why he thought the former ABS-CBN news anchor was needed for the "rebirth of the country." Espiritu said it was De Castro's attitude toward the poor and his "hesitance to be in politics for a very long time" that recommended him for the job. "I believe in the guy because of his beginnings," said Espiritu.

If that is all Espiritu can say about De Castro's credentials, that cannot adequately explain why businessmen supposedly prefer him to Poe. Besides, De Castro is weighed down by political debts to the Lopez family who remains his employer at ABS-CBN, a political baggage that Poe doesn't carry for now, although he will instantly feel its weight the moment he steps inside Malacañang—if ever. So why would De Castro be a better choice in the eyes of businessmen?

Maybe he looks like that from London, but here in Manila De Castro looks exactly like Poe: a popular figure being pushed into the most difficult job in the country by self-seeking politicians and businessmen who plan to pull him every which way they can when he goes to Malacañang.

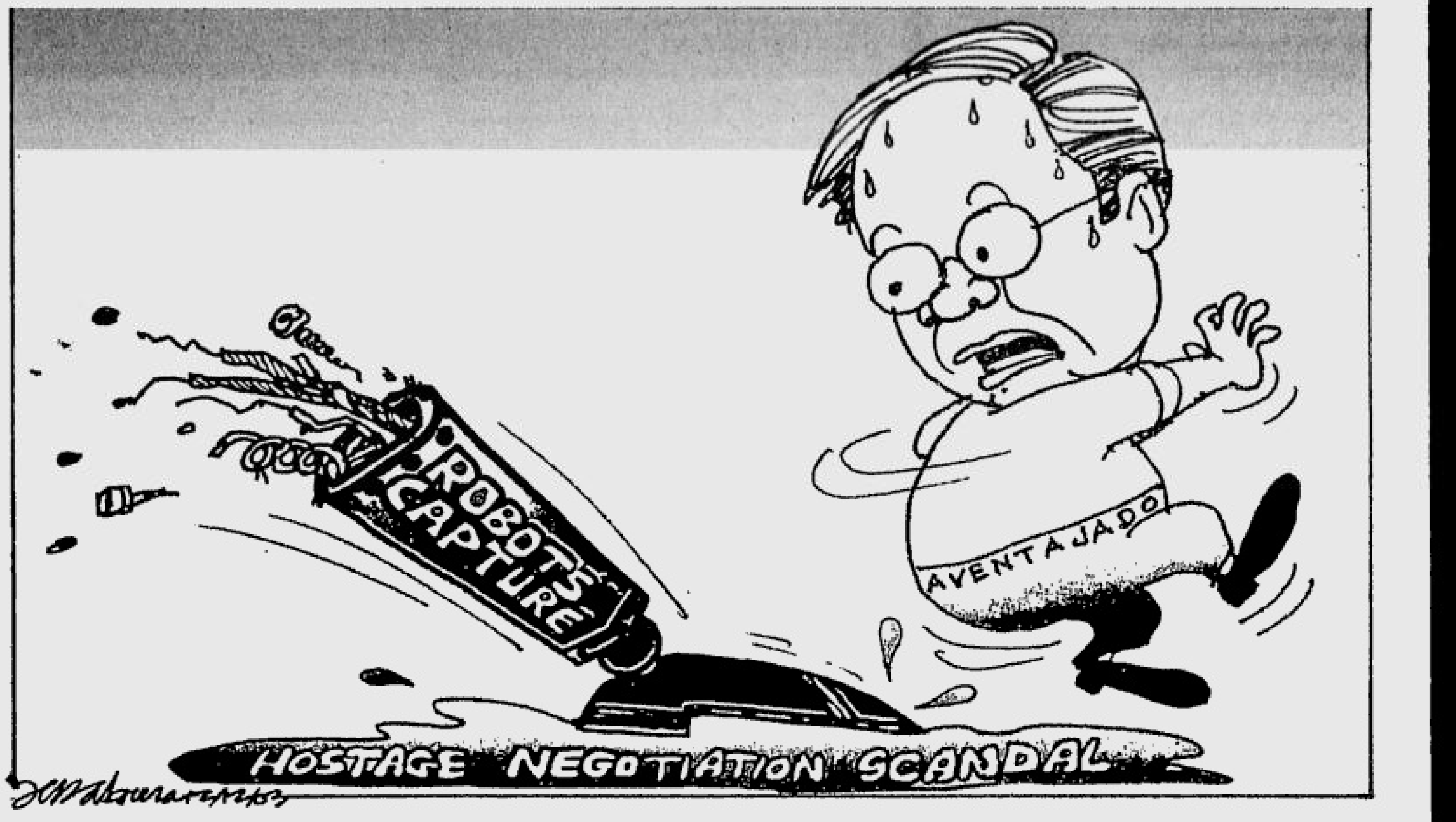
Plain English

FOREIGN COMMENT

DONALD Rumsfeld can be criticized for a lot of things. But the US defense secretary's use of English is not one of them.

"Reports that say something hasn't happened are always interesting to me," Mr. Rumsfeld said, "because, as we know, there are known knowns, there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say, we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns—the ones we don't know we don't know."

This is indeed a complex, almost Kantian, thought... Yet it is anything but foolish. It is also perfectly clear. It is expressed in admirably plain English, with not a word of jargon or gobbledygook in it... So let Rummy be. The Plain English Campaign should find itself a more deserving target for its misplaced mockery. *The Guardian (London)*



FPJ and Noli are birds of the same feather

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

WHAT difference will it make to the businessmen if Noli de Castro became president instead of Fernando Poe Jr.? They're two of a kind, a creation of media.

The stories report that only De Castro can beat FPJ for the presidency. That's debatable. FPJ can just as easily beat De Castro.

If De Castro does run, the happiest persons on earth would be President Macapagal-Arroyo and the people around her who stand to lose their jobs after the elections. In fact, it is not far-fetched that the administration is egging De Castro to run. Some people suspect that this is part of a Malacañang-Lopez deal, and that the Lopezes are now planting the seeds of ambition in their protégé's mind. De Castro and FPJ share the same voting block, the *masa*, the D and E classes. If both of them run for the same position, it will split this big block of votes. That will give GMA an advantage. Instead of De Castro or FPJ winning, they could both lose, and GMA would run laughing to Malacañang.

How about De Castro becoming the running mate of GMA? It looks like he didn't bite that, otherwise the administration would not have desperately courted former Education Secretary Raul Roco to be GMA's running mate. And why would De Castro agree to play second fiddle when he is the more popular candidate?

GMA could be an albatross around De Castro's neck, dragging him down to defeat. The purpose of a team-up with GMA is obviously for De Castro's popularity to get votes for the unpopular President. But it doesn't always happen that way, as have been shown in previous elections. When the popular GMA teamed up with the unpopular Speaker Jose de Venecia as the administration's standard bearers, GMA won but JDV lost. In the same elections, the very popular Erap teamed up with the unpopular Danding Cojuangco. Erap won but Cojuangco lost. The voters split their votes.

So De Castro may win but GMA can still lose. And we may have FPJ and De Castro as our two top officials. The *masa* will be very happy but will the businessmen like that?

In the same way, in case of a GMA-Roco team-up, Roco may win but GMA can still lose.

History is against GMA. No Filipino president has ever been reelected, with the exception of Marcos, and look what happened to him. Filipino voters are a fickle lot; they're easily disappointed. If their lives don't improve immediately, they become disappointed with the incumbent president, no matter how popular he was when he was elected, and they can't wait to kick him out.

That is now the tragedy of GMA. Although she is not technically a reelectionist, serving only the unfinished term of Joseph Estrada, she is, in the eyes of the people, a reelectionist, and she bears the burden of all presidential reelectionists. Had she not been too impatient to succeed to the presidency, and not grabbed it from Erap, she would no doubt be a very popular candidate now, her election a foregone conclusion.

Still, while it is a fact that no president has ever been reelected in the Philippines, there is always a first time. And that is the glimmer of hope that burns in the hearts of GMA and her supporters.

* * *

Fed up with the membership of their club, the National Press Club, a group of veteran journalists has formed their own club and called it Plaridel, the pen name of Marcelo H. del Pilar. The NPC used to be an elite, exclusive club of legitimate journalists, and it used to be an honor to be a member. Non-members were flattered and honored to be invited to dine and drink at its four-story clubhouse beside the Pasig River. Not anymore.

Through the years, politics opened up the formerly exclusive club to newcomers of doubtful ability and integrity, and even outright frauds, because NPC candidates needed their votes. From an original 100 members, the NPC membership has ballooned to more than 2,000 regular members with the right to vote, in addition to possibly thousands more of non-voting associate members, honorary(?) members and outright gate-crashers. The NPC premises used to be an amiable and friendly place where you relaxed with colleagues after deadline. Now, veteran members complain that they feel like strangers in their own club. They don't recognize most of the people who dine and drink there now. Those that they do recognize, they wouldn't care to associate with.

For years, the more responsible members of the NPC tried to cleanse the membership roster, but every time an election came around, more new members were admitted for their votes, many of them fake journalists. Instead of members getting fewer, their number kept getting bigger. You'd think that with so many members, the NPC would have plenty of money to pay its bills. But the NPC's debts only kept getting bigger.

Finally, some veteran members got fed up and decided to form their own club, Plaridel. The founders are the cream of Philippine journalism, with Star publisher Max Soliven as chair, INQUIRER publisher Isagani Yambot, Bulletin editors Crispulo Icban Jr. and Ben Rodriguez, former Press Secretary Rod Reyes, Standard editor in chief Jullie Yap-Daza, columnists Carmen Guerrero-Nakpil, Adrian Cristobal and Julius Fortuna, among others, as the other officers.

* * *

Calling UST alumni. The University of Sto. Tomas is inviting all alumni of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, College of Arts and Letters and College of Liberal Arts to a Christmas fellowship at the Thomas Aquinas Research Center tomorrow, Saturday, from 6 to 9 p.m.

Blessings

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

LAST Tuesday, I saw a sight where I live. It was just past 2 p.m. I was on my way to Makati to meet with somebody and was dreading the thought of driving all the way there. I normally just take the MRT going to Makati, but decided to bring the car this time since I had to go to the INQUIRER afterward (it was our anniversary). My dread proved well founded. Traffic was horrible, despite the hour, the odd day, and the fact that no accident had taken place along Edsa.

But before I got out of our compound, I saw an old man lugging a big ice cream chest on his back. He was an itinerant ice cream vendor, one of those who ply their trade our way. The others push along carts with carnival tunes tinkling after them, and only in the mornings and late afternoons when they have better chances of finding customers. And they have "runners," kids who knock on doors, or ring the doorbell like there was an emergency, and take orders from the upper floors. I don't know what kind of commission they make, but I've always been a sucker for their spirit of enterprise.

The old man was different. He was lugging the thing on his back, and his back was bent from the exertion. He was frail and ragged, his small thin body looking like a question mark when viewed from the side. He had the most mournful expression I had seen on a face. He was looking down at the pavement with vacant eyes, walking on a cloudy and tepid afternoon from inertia, one foot following another from the sheer remembrance of the motion. He wasn't shouting his ware, his mouth was agape and his breathing was labored. He probably knew there was little chance of finding anyone to buy ice cream at that hour, the compound looked deserted except for the workmen who were busy drilling into the cement. But still he walked, hoping a lightning bolt would issue from clear skies.

His face no longer wore the pained expression of someone who demanded to know from heaven why life was like this. It wore the blank expression of someone who took what he was doing at that very hour to be part of the order of the universe, as natural as the sighing of the wind and the silence of the stones. It wore the staggering weight of someone who lived in the present and for the present, someone who could see neither behind nor ahead, where he had come from and where he was going, where past and future lay. His life seemed to be governed by absolute need, and he met it with absolute instinct.

When I saw him, I remembered the old woman who to this day delivers our paper. She has been doing so for more than five years now. I am her favorite customer because when I was still writing editorials for this paper, I used to buy all the broadsheets from her, courtesy of this paper. Now I buy only one, guess what. But I have remained her favorite customer because I pay cash on the nail—something apparently her other customers in our compound do not do. They rack up a debt that keeps growing, without ever getting paid. That is why I subscribe to Nandy Pacheco's favorite cause and do not own a gun even at home: If I did, I would go out and shoot them.

I am this old woman's favorite customer for another reason. She does not only collect cash from me, she keeps mortgaging her future with me. I think I've paid her for the next several months (I don't know up to which month; I haven't counted). She needs the advance because of one thing and another, mostly the needs of her grandchildren. I have yet to hear her complain about her lot in life. Nothing we give her—sweater, umbrella, etc.—stays long with her. They are immediately passed on to kin.

I asked Manang (as we call her) once how old she was and was astounded to learn she was only in her late 60s. She looks far, far older. Her face is a map of hills and furrows, and well etched they are too. She has gotten bowlegged from the daily grind, and on mornings you can see her on the compound or out in the streets hobbling, or bobbing from side to side like an inverted pendulum. By rights she should be living the quiet life of someone who has paid her dues, with the steepest interest. By necessity, she has to climb stairs on arthritic legs, an affliction I have the most sympathy, or empathy, for. Yet wondrously, miraculously, she always manages a smile, sometimes a laugh.

After seeing the old man on our compound that warm afternoon and remembering Manang on her morning rounds, I fell into traffic in Edsa. The snarling, growling kind that sounds like dogs snapping at each other after being thrown scraps of meat. That is no exaggeration when you look at the way we drive, which is a dedicated subversion not just of basic courtesy but of rational thought. I have always wondered, having done my work from my home for more than a decade now, if I can ever work in an office again. But that is another story.

But somehow, that afternoon everything seemed like a walk in the park. Trying to extricate myself from the tangle of glass and metal that seemed to have fused like soldered iron on that spot of earth seemed like the easiest thing in the world, especially with the aid of newly restored air-conditioning. Tapping the wheel with fingers while furiously texting people to say I would be late, and wondering where on earth the cops were, they must be having beer in a neighborhood *turo-turo* to go with the free lunch, seemed almost like a benign pass. Enduring the slings and arrows of outrageous helplessness, hearing the minutes and seconds and microseconds ticking by while I stared at the world with vacant eyes, seemed like listening to Bach's suites for single cello and gazing at Van Gogh's sunflowers.

Count your blessings instead of sheep, the song says. Better still this Christmas, share them.

Placebo candidacy

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

ACTOR Fernando Poe Jr. delivered a supreme insult to the Filipino people on Wednesday when he failed to show up at the meeting of the ad hoc coalition that proclaimed him as the "united" opposition's presidential candidate for the 2004 elections.

This was at least the second time that Poe had snubbed appearances since he unilaterally announced on Nov. 26 that he was standing for president, short-circuiting a selection process of the main opposition party, the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino. This circumstance indicates Poe's disdain for the political process and his intention to set his own rules of the game.

Since his announcement, Poe has failed to show up at the forum of businessmen, who wanted to hear his views on economic issues that were the top concern of the business community, assailed by uncertainties over political instability and the economic direction under a new government in 2004. Instead he sent a proxy, Sen. Vicente Sotto, who gave the excuse that Poe was running a fever.

At the proclamation by the ramshackle opposition alliance, called Koalisyon ng Nagkakaisang Pilipino, Poe disappointed his promoters who were more enthusiastic about his presidential bid than he has manifested himself, by his non-appearance. But he rubbed salt on the wound of their humiliation by speaking through a mobile phone magnification of his voice. The voice, which sounded as though it was coming from a phantom, said: "In my entire life, I have not experienced the full trust you have given me today. Thank you very, very much for your support. In a short while, I will let you know my answer."

In effect, the opposition is putting up as presidential candidate a machine—a voice recorder—rather than a warm body.

The opposition's selection committee looked pathetic and spurned, as its chair, former Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile, was virtually reduced to a supplicant when he read the resolution which said that the group "earnestly requests him (Poe) to formally accept the selection."

Underlining the disarray of the opposition, that has been deeply split by the insistence on running of Sen. Panfilo Lacson, who had earlier proclaimed himself as the opposition's official candidate, was the absence of Sen. Edgardo Angara. Angara, who had maneuvered Poe's selection inside the LDP, was in Mexico City attending an international conference on corruption.

Through his non-appearance, Poe left the impression that he was above the rules of party politics, and that he was God's gift to the opposition who must be begged to accept his selection as its candidate. Poe has mocked a political process; and his repeated rebuffs of solicitations for his appearances in public functions, which offer the public the occasion to probe into his thinking or his worthiness for the presidency, insults the intelligence of the Filipino people who have the right to know where presidential aspirants are leading the nation.

This series of rebuffs offends the Filipino voters who, in effect, are being asked to vote for a man whose credentials for the presidency are the best-kept secret in this country and are still the subject of intense public curiosity and speculation. These rebuffs constitute a degradation of the presidency and raise the question whether Poe and his cohorts in the opposition have enough respect for the institution that is the presidency.

The important question is how long the Filipino people can take these insults without losing their self-respect. Despite Poe's mockery of the opposition's selection process, Enrile did not seem embarrassed to extol Poe's "qualities," among others, "his capacity to reunify the shattered and fragmented society, and his ability to develop a consensus among the people about the urgent measures needed to bring about meaningful changes and reforms."

Enrile's claims for his man are sheer exaggeration and fabrication. What, for example, is the basis for extolling Poe's "capacity to reunify" the nation, when, in fact Poe has evaded telling the people where he stands on critical issues of the day? His claims are no less exuberant than those made by Poe's spin artists in the Freedom, Peace and Justice Movement, who said some citizens saw in Poe "a personality and character that can inspire and unite the Filipino people." Others may ask, what is there in Poe to inspire the young, who are looking for political renewal, and isn't it odd that those who are inspired by Poe are mostly old political hacks who composed the opposition's selection committee?

It is explained that Poe's reticence is not due to fear that if he talks about public issues, he might expose his inadequacies for the presidency, but due to his reluctance to be identified as a "traditional" politician beholden to any vested interest.

The opposition's obsession with Poe stems from a single element, which Enrile described as "the tremendous outpouring of popular support for his candidacy and the phenomenal upsurge" of his popularity rating in recent public opinion surveys. Simply stated, the only credential that hypnotizes the opposition sponsors of Poe is "winnability" and nothing else.

Under the spell of the mantra of "winnability," the opposition is indulging illusion. It is also building a myth around Poe as a miracle drug whose properties are still to be tested. The opposition is offering to the Filipino people a fake medicine, a placebo that makes you feel good but does not cure.

And by the way, why are the opposition promoters of Poe rushing forward to speak on his behalf while he remains inarticulate? Why can't Poe speak for himself?

Eyesores

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

BAGUIO—On the drive up here, I had a glimpse of what John Silva, a consultant of the National Museum and avid champion of our heritage and environment, had written about in an essay that's been making the rounds of the e-mail circuit.

Driving up to this city during the Advertising Congress, Silva said he was dismayed to find practically every tree and shrub along the highway starting from Tarlac covered by promotional banners and pennants. The biggest culprit, judging from its almost blanket coverage, said Silva, was Smart, with its "Addict" collaterals.

As if the huge billboards that obscure one's view of the countryside was not enough, said Silva, the banners ruin whatever enjoyment the motorist seeks by fleeing the city. All throughout the drive to Baguio, he said, the incessant, heavy-handed selling provided no respite from urban pressure, not even a chance to appreciate the greenery or the quiet rural neighborhoods.

The advertising material, he pointed out, even presents a clear environmental threat, nailed down even to young trees that are in all probability subject to constant attacks by hammer and nail throughout the year.

Silva said Smart's main competitor, Globe, could not be entirely absolved of committing environmental offenses. Edged out of the roadsides by Smart's blanket coverage, Globe resorted to hanging banners across the streets and highways, adding further to the visual clutter.

I spotted some of these banners and pennants on the way up yesterday, though more than a week after the Ad Congress, they were faded and bedraggled. But I felt a bit of Silva's indignation as we drove through Club John Hay. Now spruced up, John Hay's grounds would have been an inviting sight were it not for, you guessed it, the Smart banners hanging from metal posts scattered around the property. John Hay was the site of the Ad Congress, so I guess Smart, as one of the major sponsors, was given the right to assail the delegates' senses (and sensibilities) throughout the event. But the Ad Congress is long over. I do hope the Smart banners will be torn down soon and won't be permanent eyesores in the otherwise tranquil spaces of John Hay.

* * *

SILVA had a point when he said that the owners of both Smart's and Globe's parent companies are, by all indications, cultured, urbane and well-informed individuals.

Surely, he said, they had read studies that showed tourists preferred to travel through countryside unmarred by billboards or other advertising paraphernalia. Being well-traveled, he said, these captains of industry and commerce surely remember the joy of driving (or being driven) through the countrysides of Italy or France or Spain and finding wide-open vistas that allowed them to take in the view without getting distracted by ads for cell phones.

Would they allow Smart or Globe banners to blanket their own gardens or backyards? Would they not feel offended if similar paraphernalia were allowed to blanket the golf courses they frequent? Then why do they allow their underlings to destroy the scenery for the rest of the population?

* * *

PREVIOUS to this protest against Smart's visual bombardment, the last time Silva made the e-mail circuit sizzle was when he circulated a statement assailing the candidates in the 2001 elections for foisting their faces and names on the electorate. It wasn't just the drive to Baguio that was marred by campaign materials, but the entire country. One couldn't drive through even the remotest corner of the Philippines without spotting campaign material dangling from trees and plastered on fences. Some candidates were more visible than others, which could also be used to gauge their funding and logistical capabilities (though not their abilities as actual legislators or officials, sadly). Everywhere one went, one found campaign material nailed on trees and posts, plastered on walls and hanging from every spare inch of space.

What made Silva even more indignant, and this generated the most controversy, was that even candidates espousing "new" politics were not above inflicting their own eyesores on the public. Surely, he pointed out, if they were working for change, they would start by changing their own campaign tactics and refusing to join in the grand litter fest.

Well, it's campaign season again and the offensive visuals have begun making their appearance. On the drive up here, I espied banners and posters of both local and national candidates, all purporting to greet the citizens on one pretext or another, be it a fiesta, the Christmas season, or that danged Ad Congress again.

* * *

IT'S not too late, we can still stave off the visual assault. Perhaps Silva would like to start a grass-roots campaign to tell candidates that among the criteria people will be using to judge them will be their willingness to risk defeat by not assailing our senses with their messy collaterals.

Surely, if candidates truly cared about the country, they would care about the environment, and if they couldn't save it entirely, they could at least not contribute to its further destruction or "uglification."

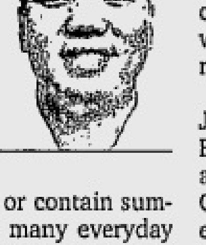
Silva has a point when he says a scorched-earth, take-no-prisoners marketing strategy may also backfire, making consumers so sick of the product and brand name they actually remember it—and resolve not to buy or patronize it.

That's the same risk candidates and parties take. Their sheer visibility may, far from making voters remember them come election time, convince them instead to scratch them from the list of candidates to vote for.

Cast a vote for the environment and tell campaign litterers where they can put their billboards, pennants and *peryodikit*!

Food in our history

LOOKING BACK



Ambeth R. Ocampo

WHEN people enter my study and ask whether I have read all the books on the shelves, I don't know whether to laugh or to cry. The question can be taken two ways: as a compliment (you read a lot and are probably smart) or an insult (did you really read all these books or merely buy them for display?). To be frank, there are many books on my shelves that I have not read and will probably never read, some remain half read or at least browsed or consulted, others join a long list of books to read when I am forced to stay indoors by inclement weather.

Some time in the past, I was foolish enough to contemplate reading every single book Jose Rizal read, if only to understand what made him tick. If books provide the mind with its furniture, I thought that reading Rizal's books would help me navigate inside his head.

Unfortunately, Rizal's taste in literature was vastly different from mine. When he credited "Uncle Tom's Cabin," "Wandering Jew" and "Ruins of Palmyra" for the inspiration to write "Noli Me Tangere," I don't quite understand what he meant. The "Noli" is so much fun compared with these arid novels. I did try reading them but couldn't get beyond Page 10, no matter how hard I pushed myself.

On my own list is Marcel Proust. I have long planned to read him but have not done so. The little I have read of Proust is a selection from "Remembrance of Things Past" that the late Doreen Fernandez usually assigned to her Freshman English class.

Proust narrates how a small crumb of madeleine (the closest thing to it we have in the Philippines is *mamon*) on the tip of the narrator's tongue triggers a flood of warm childhood memories. Certain foods affect us in a very emotional way, making me conclude that food is more than nourishment for the body and part of our memories. In a larger sense, food is history.

Unfortunately, food doesn't figure prominently in our history books, which more often than not focus on the lives of great men or contain summaries of political history. Like many everyday things that fill our lives, what we see, smell, touch, taste and even hear (like the crunchiness of *chicharon*) we rarely notice. Few historical figures were idle or moved enough to make a record of, say, morning coffee in their diaries and journals that later become the stuff professional historians call primary sources. And even if food is mentioned, most historians gloss over it.

For example, we know that Rizal's favorite breakfast was not *churros con chocolate eh* (or *chocolate ah*) but rather something exotic: *sardinas secas*. When translated into English as "dried sardines" or better still into Filipino as "*tuyo*," then ordinary mortals like you and me acquire something in common with the national hero.

Rizal's letters to his family contain requests for different types of food from home, including *pancit* and *burong mangga*. There really is something in food that brings us all down to earth.

Emilio Aguinaldo endured a breakfast diet of *camote* and butter in Banawe while he was escaping a dragnet thrown by the enemy who spent months in hot pursuit before they captured him in Palanan, Isabela. We know what Andres Bonifacio read, but we don't know what he ate, leaving a great gap in our knowledge of him and the Revolution. Marcelo H. del Pilar and Felix Resurreccion Hidalgo dined in the Paris home of Juliana Gorricho, who would later be shot dead by her son-in-law Juan Luna though not for her cooking. Del Pilar, Rizal and Resurreccion Hidalgo were in Paris for the Universal Expo of 1889 and none of them mentioned the Eiffel Tower in their journals and correspondence, but they recorded feasting on Filipino food (*adobo* actually) and even eating with their hands, a century before Kamayan restaurant made it respectable.

There is so much food in our history that Nick Joaquin even commented that the great Malolos Banquet of September 1898 should be considered as important a historical artifact as the Malolos Constitution! This fabulous luncheon with its seven appetizers and seven courses, all eaten with wines and liqueur, is something that will be hard to replicate in our times.

All these historical reflections on food came to mind as I browsed through the recently launched "Comfort Food," an anthology of essays edited by Erlinda Enriquez Panlilio. From expatriate Filipinos of the 19th century to our day, we have all craved for particular dishes that remind us of country and, on a more personal level, home. "Comfort Food" is history on the tip of the tongue that triggers many sensations and memories that, brought together, form part of that elusive thing we call national identity.

Being Filipino is very much like words and food on the tip of our tongue. We know and yet we cannot find the right words to express what we feel or what we want to say. This anthology has done just that, capturing the tastes and memories that form comfort food—*mama mia* food—to many of us between the pages of a book. I really wish I had written more than a blurb for this wonderfully exploratory book.

Compilations by one author on various subjects are out, anthologies of essays by various authors on one subject are in. For those with other comforts, it would be rewarding to browse through "Lola's Aparador," edited by Emmie Velarde and, "Consuming Passions: Philippine Collectibles," edited by Jaime C. Laya.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Lanterns of hope

COMMENTARY

Mia Aureus

Institute on Church and Social Issues

AFTER ATTENDING the 5:30 a.m. Mass two Sundays ago at the Good Shepherd Church in Fairview, Quezon City, I noticed a tall, white Christmas tree towering by the stairs leading out to the gates. Unlike in previous Christmases, this tree looked rather bare. It lacked the festive nature the yuletide season normally brings.

Now, my father was quite a Christmas-tree kind of person, so I grew up with Christmas trees filled with sparkling Christmas balls, angel ornaments, icicles and lights that danced to the beat of "Jingle Bells" and "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer." So I know a lovely Christmas tree when I see one. (I'm sure every person, especially kids, does.) And that church tree definitely did not strike me as lovely.

For one thing, all I could see were white-painted twigs sticking out. Then it had less than 10 tiny *parols* hanging from its thin branches. My first impression was, "I have never seen such a lifeless Christmas tree in my life until now."

I snapped out of such sad reverie when my 5-year-old niece tugged at my shirt and begged that we buy at least one of the small *parols* piled up on the table nearby. I noticed a number of people crowding around the table, scribbling something on the colored lanterns. Then the guy in charge took their *parols* and put them on the tree. I realized then that there has to be a special story behind this plain-looking Christmas tree.

That story led me past the wall of a posh subdivision and into the narrow alleys of Sitio Lilac, cramped by ghettos where children suffering from malnutrition live.

Last Saturday, I visited Sitio Lilac with some staff members of our barangay office. Stepping out of Mang Boy's orange tricycle, I shielded my eyes from the sun to get a better view of the place. The first thing I observed was the stark contrast between the well-furnished, green-roofed houses of Greenview Subdivision and the cramped dingy houses of Lilac. A high wall separated these two worlds, defining their boundaries.

It was not the first time I had seen that wall. Years ago some of my playmates moved to Greenview. And every summer when my siblings and I visited them, we would walk happily to the clubhouse and have a nice swim. On our way there, I often saw that high wall surrounding the area. But I didn't care much what was on the other side of it. I was too excited chatting with my friends about the games we would play.

But on that Saturday morning, standing amid a few half-naked kids with bulging tummies, I felt a bit odd seeing a different picture on the other side of the wall. It also felt strange that instead of making my way toward the clubhouse, I found myself knocking on doors of some of Sitio Lilac's families.

Amelita Sanico, 40, raised the door curtain of her bedroom so I could meet her children, who were all sleeping peacefully on the floor. She looked wistfully at her 4-year-old daughter, Lovely, who sucked her thumb like it was a milk bottle. Amelita said Lovely often gets sick and she prays for her daughter to get healthy. But with her husband earning only P200 a day as a helper-mechanic, she said they barely have enough to provide decent meals for their four children and cover other household expenses.

Liza Depaz, 30, also wishes good health for her son, Justin. She said Justin was afflicted with bacterial meningitis last year and the medical expenses cost the family a lot. While I was talking to Liza, Justin ran up to her and pointed at his right foot. I knew he wanted her mother to clean his muddy foot but he couldn't speak out the words properly.

Four-year-old Jonel has the same problem. I asked him what gift he wanted to receive from Santa Claus this Christmas, but he couldn't speak well. His mother, Norma Manga, 32, tried to interpret the sounds he made. Later she apologized and said her son still has trouble talking.

Because of very low family incomes, many of the children in Sitio Lilac suffer from malnutrition. It has not only caused their frail health but also stunted their mental growth. In 1998, the Washington Times reported that "leading US health officials believe hunger and malnutrition in the Third World have caused brain damage to as many as two billion people, cutting their IQs from 5 to 15 points and leaving them intellectually impaired." It quoted Reynaldo Martorell, chair of the department of international health at Emory University in Atlanta, as saying that "of the 4.7 billion people in the Third World, one-third to one-half are intellectually impaired—easily by 5 to 10 IQ points."

To prevent further damage due to malnutrition on Sitio Lilac's children as well as those in Sitio Roces, the Good Shepherd Church organized last year a one-month feeding program. It fed 30 children, among them Lovely, Justin and Jonel. According to Articer Quebal, head of the Social Service and Development Ministry of the church, they also taught parents how to prepare inexpensive but nutritious food. Amelita Sanico, who attended and finished the course, said she could prepare a meal for less than P50.

Quebal added that after the program, the child beneficiaries gained weight. The average increase was from 6 to 10 lb.

The church, however, found it hard to sustain the feeding program which costs P30,000 a month. So the ministry found other ways of raising funds this Christmas.

Every Christmas, the Good Shepherd Church would put a Christmas tree all aglow by the entrance, decorated with red and gold Christmas ornaments and glittery *sinamai* ribbons. However, this Christmas, the church decided to use it for more than just display. Francis Nipal, head of the fund-raising program, suggested that "instead of buying new decorations for the tree, they sell small *parols* made by the people from the sitios as part of the fund-raising program." Thus, the program would generate not only funds but also employment.

Entitled "Parol na Palamuti, Alay Ko sa Batang Munti," the project produced over 200 small *parols* which are given away for a donation of P100 each. Nipal said P25 goes to the *parol* makers while P75 goes to the feeding program.

Rita Develos, who is in charge of the parol production, said they have already hung 200 *parols* and are asking the *parol* makers to produce 150 more. She was quite happy the program is going well. More than that, she beamed at the thought of expanding the feeding program next year to other sitios in Barangay Fairview.

Last Sunday when I attended the 5:30 Sunday Mass again, I noticed that the once bare tree was lit up with bright yellow Christmas lights and hanging from its thin branches were far more than 10 *parols*. The tree no longer looked lifeless. It looked so alive with all the *parols*, giving hope of a better life to little children and their families. Before I left the church after the Mass, I scribbled my family's name on a blue *parol* and hung it with the others. As I walked down the stairs, I looked back at it, smiled and then hummed to myself, "Oh Christmas tree, Oh Christmas tree, how lovely are your branches…"

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Christianizing Christmas parties

SOON, offices, schools, families and other organizations will be holding Christmas parties. I hope that this year, such parties would not be a slap on the face of the birthday Celebrant Himself. For the atmosphere of most of such gatherings has deteriorated recently: unwholesome program numbers, party emcees telling green jokes, naughty twists attached to parlor games... While Christmas parties need not be prayer meetings, neither should they be pagan orgies, as if Christmas were not all about God becoming Man to sanctify human existence.

The recent efforts to counter the commercialization of Christmas—through Christmas outreach programs, for example—are heartening. I wish such efforts would include Christianizing the tone of Christmas celebrations everywhere. Only then would Christmas parties be worthy of their name. Besides, wholesome fun can be lots of fun.

—CRISTINA A. MONTES,
30 Nottingham St.,
Hillsborough, Alabang,
Muntinlupa City

Stories that lift up spirits

MAY I congratulate and commend you for putting on the front page last Nov. 30, 2003 the inspiring stories about the accomplishments of the Philippines' first world-class and world-renowned teacher, Josette T. Biyo, and of the three Pinoy grade schoolers who won the bronze medal in the 5th International Robot Olympiad in South Korea. One who has read the articles cannot help feeling proud of them, and of Filipinos in general, for in spite of grinding poverty and terrible odds, we have managed to survive and even shine in international competitions.

May I suggest that you feature also the accomplishments of the three young boys from the Manila Science High School, and the lad from the Iligan Institute of Technology who garnered prizes in physics and microbiology in the same international competition in Louisville, Kentucky. Stories like theirs lift up the spirit and keep alive the hope that not all is lost for our poor country.

—CAROLINA C. GRIÑO-AQUINO,
59 D. Tuazon Ave.,
Sta. Mesa Heights, Quezon City

LETTERS

More wholesome advertisements

IN YOUR SMART advertisement today, (PDI, 11/19/03) "Sizzlers in Baguio," featuring a nude woman on fire, I felt offended for there seems no connection between a nude woman with Smart's parties in Baguio.

The advertisement looks cheap and it will be truly appreciated if you can feature more wholesome and dignified advertisements.

—PATRIA Q. BAÑEZ,
13 Salvi St., Tierra Pura Homes,
Tandang Sora Avenue,
Quezon City

Unholy alliance at our expense

MALACAÑANG may be making the right choice in getting Sen. Noli de Castro as President Macapagal-Arroyo's running mate to boost her chances in 2004. But the Freedom from Debt Coalition believes it is the Lopezes who would be getting the windfall out of this deal.

The emerging unholy alliance between GMA and the Lopez family, reportedly sealed through the GMA-De Castro tandem, spells doom for millions of Maynilad and Meralco consumers.

It appears that in exchange for the Lopezes' support to her 2004 presidential bid, the President has been granting generous concessions to Maynilad and Meralco.

Maynilad is currently facing public outrage after contaminated water running through its pipes killed at least seven people and downed more than 500 others with cholera in Tondo and Malabon. To cap Maynilad's woes, the International Arbitration panel has ordered the water utility company to pay P6.77 billion in concession fees.

The government, however, has hardly lifted a finger to hold Maynilad accountable. The President has remained silent on the issue of Maynilad's contaminated water. The MWSS-RO remains complacent as it is again prevented from drawing on the US$120 million performance bond, despite the fact that the bond is not covered by Maynilad's rehabilitation program.

On the other hand, Meralco is pushing for a P0.1358/kWh rate increase. On top of this, consumers continue to pay for expensive electricity and even electricity they did not consume.

But instead of asserting its majority voting rights in the public's behalf, government has been subservient to the whims and caprices of the Lopezes and their appointees to the board. Further, the government has failed to exert best efforts to lower, if not eradicate, the onerous purchased power adjustment (PPA) resulting from contracts between Meralco and the IPPs.

Are these developments mere coincidences? The FDC doesn't think so, especially with election time just around the corner, and GMA's credibility increasingly shaken. Malacañang would need all the help it can get, even at the expense of the poor.

—WILSON FORTALEZA,
vice president,
Freedom from Debt Coalition,
34 Matiaga St.,
Central District,
Quezon City

Never attended school

LAST Oct. 23, 2003, former President Fidel V. Ramos said the country deserves someone better than actor Fernando Poe Jr. Also, Sen. Robert Barbers said that Poe could easily win the presidential election, but pointed out that winning is one thing and governing is another. (PDI, 10/24/03)

Although Ramos studied and graduated from the US Military Academy at West Point, he has forgotten his American history. Zachary Taylor, the 12th US president, was elected even though he had no experience in holding any public office, appointive or elected. Moreover, he had no formal education as he never went to school. He was educated through private tutoring.

—ELIGIO M. PASTORIN,
92 Paraiso St., Marikina City

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Writers of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

Resumption of executions

I, BEING a Catholic, am not in favor of taking the lives of others. However, under certain circumstances, I believe that this is also a necessity for the betterment of our society.—**Desiree Belle C. Sy, via e-mail**

* * *

The death penalty issue is an emotional one. When the law restoring it was passed, the lawmakers did it in record time. It was a knee-jerk reaction to a series of heinous crimes that grabbed the headlines prior to its passage. The proponents of the bill and those who voted it into law were merely grandstanding.

VOICES ON INQ7.NET

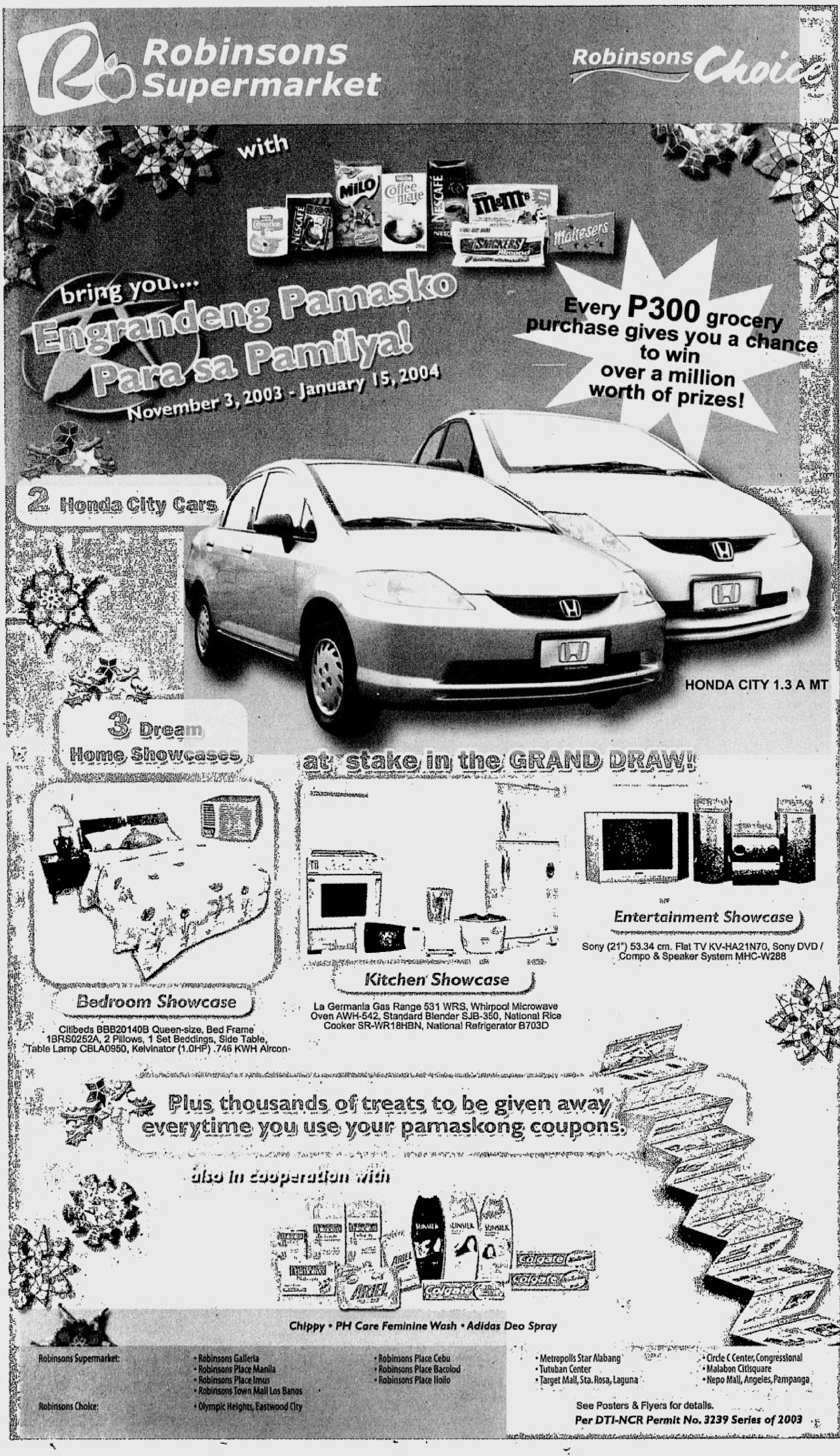
Passing the law was then the easy way to calm down an agitated citizenry. When the passion died down, the moratorium came. Many years later, the government could not show convincing proof that the law solved the peace and order problem.

The resurgence of big and heinous crimes today committed in broad daylight is merely a result of the general perception in the criminals' mind that they can commit these crimes and get away with them. Catching true criminals and successfully prosecuting them are what deter them from committing more crimes. Statistics from progressive countries in Europe and some states in the United States of America that abolished the death penalty, clearly show that effective law enforcement is what holds criminals at bay.—**Ramon G. Garanzo, via e-mail**

* * *

What the government needs to address is its ways of enforcing law and order in the country. The re-imposition of capital punishment only shows the inability of the present administration to address the problems of criminality and this also gives us an idea of how weak our country's leaders are in finding humane solutions to the problem of rising criminality.

I do see that reviving capital punishment has a political agenda behind it, knowing that national elections are just around the corner. Is it for the benefit of the majority or just for the votes that President Macapagal-Arroyo is expected to gather in the incoming national elections?—**Edgardo A. Vizcarra, via e-mail**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10 dead as 2 fires hit Baguio City, Negros town

By Romy G. Amarado and Alex V. Pal, *PDI Visayas Bureau* and Frank Cimatu, *PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

TEN people were killed in separate fires that struck a house in Dumaguete City and a nightclub in Baguio City.

In Baguio, eight people, including six female dancers and entertainers, died of suffocation after a fire hit a nightclub along Magsaysay Avenue on Thursday.

The victims, police said, were identified only by their stage names Jada, Mayumi, Kaycee, Monica and April. They were members of a Laguna-based dance group "M & M" contracted by owners of the Perutz Nightclub as guest dancers.

Also killed in the fire that broke out at 10:45 a.m. were a certain Marvin, the group's manager; a certain Edcel, the acting floor manager of Perutz; and a woman who served as assistant to the group.

Reports said the victims were fast asleep in a cramped room in the nightclub when the fire broke out. The group reportedly finished working at 4 a.m. Thursday and had been in the city for only about 10 days.

Lovely, a guest relations officer (GRO) in Perutz, said the victims were very happy as they were working on Wednesday night.

"They were so happy last night. April even told me that she will send money to her mother," Lovely said.

A Perutz worker who was able to get out of the nightclub as the fire broke out said he failed to alert the victims because it was dark and the club's hallways are narrow. The nightclub is in a basement of a commercial building on Magsaysay Avenue.

Another worker said the club's fire exit, located near the dance floor and stage, was blocked by a refrigerator.

Fire Officer 1 Arnol Olyem Sr. said the fire started in one of the six "VIP" rooms in the club. He said they were checking the establishment to confirm if the fire was caused by faulty electrical connection.

This was the second time in six months that fire hit a nightclub in the city. Blue Riband, also located in the basement of a building along Naguilian Road, was burned in September.

In Dumaguete City, reports said the son of the mayor of Amlan town in Negros Oriental and the family helper died while the wife and son of the first fatality were injured in a fire in their home in the town.

Lawyer Oscar dela Cruz, 47, city secretary for Dumaguete, was declared dead on arrival at the Silliman University Medical Center.

He died of heart attack after he jumped from the second floor of his two-story house in Barangay Poblacion, Amlan, some 18 kilometers north of here. Part of his body suffered minor burns.

His wife Theresa and son Vikoy, 11, also leaped from the second floor of their house to escape. Theresa suffered fractures in the pelvic bone. Her son suffered minor bruises. Both were confined at the SUMC.

Their helper Jemima Rendal, 14, failed to get out of the house. Firefighters later found her charred remains among the rubble.

De la Cruz is the son of Amlan Mayor Victorino de la Cruz. He had also served as Dumaguete City legal officer.

Insp. Jose Aguilar, Amlan police chief, said the fire broke out at about 2 a.m. in the De la Cruz home and later spread to two other houses and the newly opened Birdie's bakery.

Aguilar told Gov. George Arnaiz, who went to the fire scene, that the fire was believed to have started from behind the refrigerator.

He said a maid told police sparks were coming out from where the refrigerator is just before the fire broke out.

Firemen from the town of San Jose and the cities of Dumaguete, Tanjay and Bais responded to the fire alarm. The fire was placed under control more than two hours later.

Zaldy Sienes, a barangay councilor of Amlan and a correspondent of a local radio station, said the couple and their son were sleeping inside the room on the second floor when they noticed the fire. *With a report from Rod Bansag, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Group of fishermen urges governor to put a stop to Bohol illegal fishing

By Chito A. Fuentes
PDI Visayas Bureau

TAGBILARAN CITY—Concerned fishermen from Bohol's northwestern towns are urging Gov. Erico Aumentado to exert all efforts to save Danajon Bank by dealing with illegal fishing activities in the area.

Led by the Kahugpongan sa mga Mananagat sa Danajon (Kamada), the fishermen met with Aumentado at the Capitol on Wednesday to express their concern for the future of the Danajon Double Barrier Reef, the only one in the country and in Southeast Asia.

The alliance is composed of fishermen's organizations in 13 barangays in the towns of Tubigon, Getafe, Talibon, Bien Unido, Ubay and President Garcia.

To prove Kamada's concern, its leaders volunteered to help the government in fighting illegal fishing and enforcing fisheries laws.

But the group requested that their members be deputized as fish wardens and allow them to join in the Coastal Law Enforcement Council (CLEC) operations in their respective areas.

The local government units have the authority to designate the fishermen as deputized fish wardens. But Aumentado promised the Kamada members that he would help them attain their requests.

The fishermen said they signed a memorandum of understanding with the governor that detailed the deputization of Kamada members as fish wardens, involvement in CLEC operations and the holding of regular dialogues with Aumentado.

Guillermo Reyes, Kamada spokesperson, said the residents were aware of the real situation and were adversely affected by the unabated illegal fishing activities.

Reyes said the group presented a consolidated list of fishermen involved in the illegal fishing activities in the respective areas.

He said Kamada was still validating the names of politicians who benefited from the illegal fishing activities.

In a press conference held after the dialogue with Aumentado, Kamada leaders said the CLEC has been insufficient in patrolling the seas.

"It would be good if the CLEC seaborne patrol visit our area once a month," a Kamada leader from Getafe town said.

230 Pampanga families flee their communities

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—About 230 families started fleeing Barangay Kamias in Porac, Pampanga on Wednesday amid continued military operations, an Aeta leader said.

Nelson Mallari, secretary general of the Central Luzon Aeta Association (CLAA), said the families evacuated from Sitios Balangkas, Sentro and Barsola to Barangay Planas, where they have relatives.

Mallari said he slipped past a military checkpoint in Barangay Pasbul on Thursday morning. He reported the evacuation before noon Thursday.

Col. Herbert Yambing, commander of the Army's 69th Infantry Battalion, confirmed the evacuation but said these were prompted by a plan of the New People's Army to attack Army soldiers in Kamias and later the Sweet Crystals, the country's biggest sugar mill also in Porac.

"Two days before the Somo (suspension of offensive military operations), we have sighted a large band of NPA rebels in Wacap (San Marcelino, Zambales) moving toward Porac and so we conducted operations," Yambing told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

According to him, the rebels, not government troopers, had threatened the Aeta families to leave the villages.

"The rebels are not honoring the government's Somo. We wouldn't be doing operations if the rebels are not in an offensive position," Yambing said.

He said the evacuation occurred amid the rice harvest period.

The government has declared a Christmas ceasefire from Dec. 10 to Jan. 6, 2004. The National Democratic Front's national council, on the other hand, announced the implementation of a ceasefire from Dec. 20 to Jan. 4.

The Aeta leaders said soldiers instructed them to take orders only from military commanders in the area.

In a related development, Lt. Gen. Romeo Dominguez, commander of the Army's Northern Luzon Command, said he had ordered Lt. Gen. Alberto Braganza, chief of the Army's 7th Infantry Division, to conduct a "formal inquiry" on reports of human rights violations by soldiers in Pampanga and Zambales.

Col. Domingo Tutaan, commander of the 24th Infantry Battalion, also denied that his troops based in Barangay Nabuklod, Floridablanca, Pampanga, have committed abuses against Aeta residents there.

"The people there love us," he said. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

Vizcaya gov OKs ₱20,000 bonuses for gov't workers

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—The holiday season would be merrier for officials and employees of the provincial government as Gov. Rodolfo Agbayani on Thursday approved the release of P18.4 million to fund the granting of at least P20,000 bonus to each employee.

The grant comes as an added cash benefit for the more than 900 regular and casual employees of the provincial government.

In passing the appropriation ordinance, the Sangguniang Panlalawigan said provincial officials have been "convinced of the relevance to reward deserving public servants of the provincial government."

"This is a fitting recognition to the effort of our officials and rank-and-file employees, which has earned for (the province) numerous awards this year and the past years," said Agbayani.

But he clarified that the granting of the P20,000 bonus is still subject to President Macapagal-Arroyo's approval.

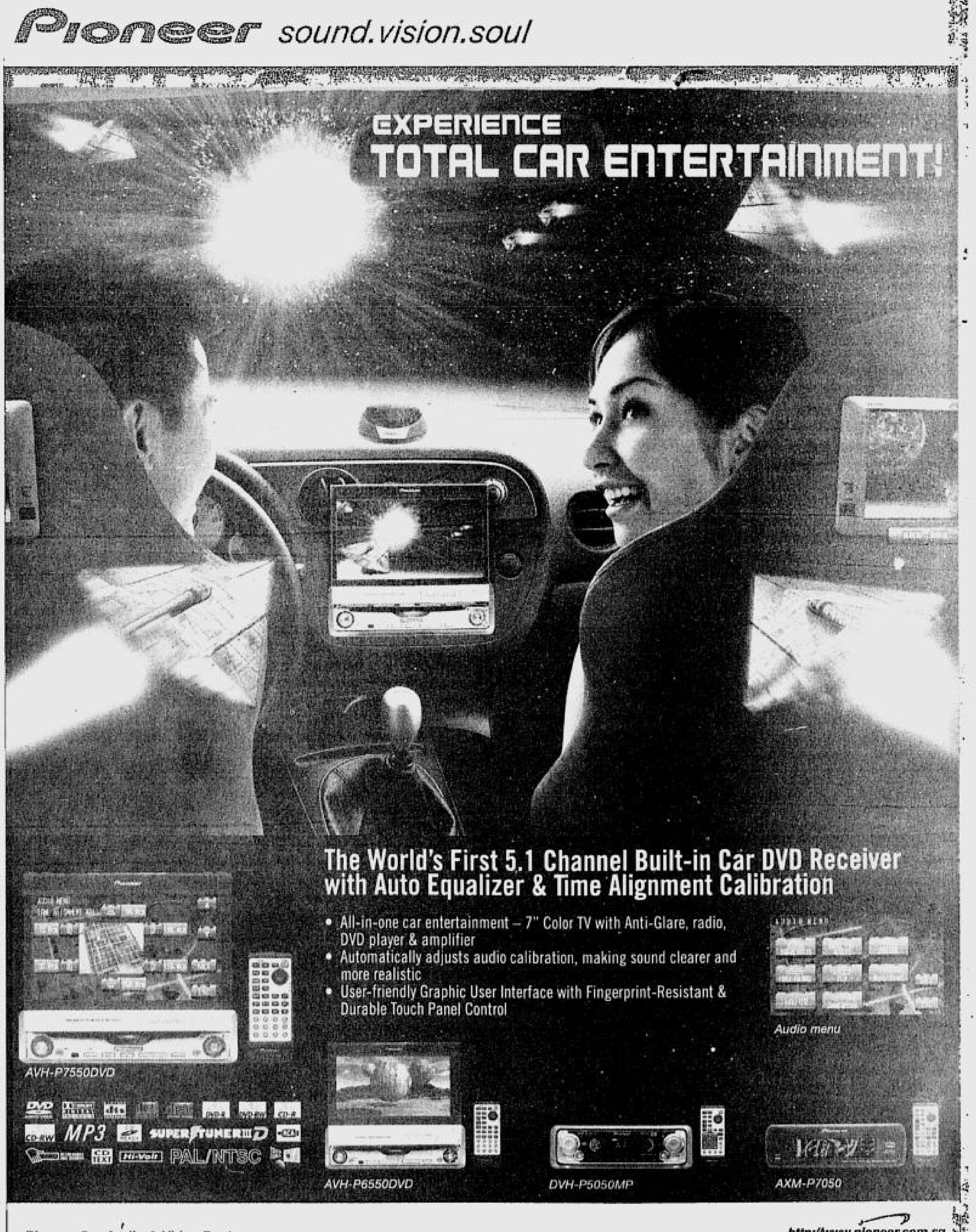
Earlier, the provincial board asked Ms Macapagal to exempt Nueva Vizcaya from the prohibition imposed through a budget circular on the granting of bonuses to local government employees.

Board Member Patricio Dumlao Jr., author of the ordinance, said provincial treasurer Perfecto Martinez Jr. has certified that the province's coffers has enough funds for the bonuses.

Dumlao said the province has "tremendous" savings "on account of (the provincial government's) effective austerity measures."

He said the release of the employees' bonuses was done "without (sacrificing) the delivery of basic services to our constituents."

Manuel Tabora, acting provincial budget officer, said the final guidelines on the awarding of bonuses have yet to be formulated by the local finance committee to determine how each employee would be compensated. *Melvin Gascon, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*



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10 dead as 2 fires hit Baguio City, Negros town

By Romy G. Amarado and Alex V. Pal, *PDI Visayas Bureau* and Frank Cimatu, *PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

TEN people were killed in separate fires that struck a house in Dumaguete City and a nightclub in Baguio City.

In Baguio, eight people, including six female dancers and entertainers, died of suffocation after a fire hit a nightclub along Magsaysay Avenue on Thursday.

The victims, police said, were identified only by their stage names Jada, Mayumi, Kaycee, Monica and April. They were members of a Laguna-based dance group "M & M" contracted by owners of the Perutz Nightclub as guest dancers.

Also killed in the fire that broke out at 10:45 a.m. were a certain Marvin, the group's manager; a certain Edcel, the acting floor manager of Perutz; and a woman who served as assistant to the group.

Reports said the victims were fast asleep in a cramped room in the nightclub when the fire broke out. The group reportedly finished working at 4 a.m. Thursday and had been in the city for only about 10 days.

Lovely, a guest relations officer (GRO) in Perutz, said the victims were very happy as they were working on Wednesday night.

"They were so happy last night. April even told me that she will send money to her mother," Lovely said.

A Perutz worker who was able to get out of the nightclub as the fire broke out said he failed to alert the victims because it was dark and the club's hallways are narrow. The nightclub is in a basement of a commercial building on Magsaysay Avenue.

Another worker said the club's fire exit, located near the dance floor and stage, was blocked by a refrigerator.

Fire Officer 1 Arnol Olyem Sr. said the fire started in one of the six "VIP" rooms in the club. He said they were checking the establishment to confirm if the fire was caused by faulty electrical connection.

This was the second time in six months that fire hit a nightclub in the city. Blue Riband, also located in the basement of a building along Naguilian Road, was burned in September.

In Dumaguete City, reports said the son of the mayor of Amlan town in Negros Oriental and the family helper died while the wife and son of the first fatality were injured in a fire in their home in the town.

Lawyer Oscar dela Cruz, 47, city secretary for Dumaguete, was declared dead on arrival at the Silliman University Medical Center.

He died of heart attack after he jumped from the second floor of his two-story house in Barangay Poblacion, Amlan, some 18 kilometers north of here. Part of his body suffered minor burns.

His wife Theresa and son Vikoy, 11, also leaped from the second floor of their house to escape. Theresa suffered fractures in the pelvic bone. Her son suffered minor bruises. Both were confined at the SUMC.

Their helper Jemima Rendal, 14, failed to get out of the house. Firefighters later found her charred remains among the rubble.

De la Cruz is the son of Amlan Mayor Victorino de la Cruz. He had also served as Dumaguete City legal officer.

Insp. Jose Aguilar, Amlan police chief, said the fire broke out at about 2 a.m. in the De la Cruz home and later spread to two other houses and the newly opened Birdie's bakery.

Aguilar told Gov. George Arnaiz, who went to the fire scene, that the fire was believed to have started from behind the refrigerator.

He said a maid told police sparks were coming out from where the refrigerator is just before the fire broke out.

Firemen from the town of San Jose and the cities of Dumaguete, Tanjay and Bais responded to the fire alarm. The fire was placed under control more than two hours later.

Zaldy Sienes, a barangay councilor of Amlan and a correspondent of a local radio station, said the couple and their son were sleeping inside the room on the second floor when they noticed the fire. *With a report from Rod Bansag, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Group of fishermen urges governor to put a stop to Bohol illegal fishing

By Chito A. Fuentes
PDI Visayas Bureau

TAGBILARAN CITY—Concerned fishermen from Bohol's northwestern towns are urging Gov. Erico Aumentado to exert all efforts to save Danajon Bank by dealing with illegal fishing activities in the area.

Led by the Kahugpongan sa mga Mananagat sa Danajon (Kamada), the fishermen met with Aumentado at the Capitol on Wednesday to express their concern for the future of the Danajon Double Barrier Reef, the only one in the country and in Southeast Asia.

The alliance is composed of fishermen's organizations in 13 barangays in the towns of Tubigon, Getafe, Talibon, Bien Unido, Ubay and President Garcia.

To prove Kamada's concern, its leaders volunteered to help the government in fighting illegal fishing and enforcing fisheries laws.

But the group requested that their members be deputized as fish wardens and allow them to join in the Coastal Law Enforcement Council (CLEC) operations in their respective areas.

The local government units have the authority to designate the fishermen as deputized fish wardens. But Aumentado promised the Kamada members that he would help them attain their requests.

The fishermen said they signed a memorandum of understanding with the governor that detailed the deputization of Kamada members as fish wardens, involvement in CLEC operations and the holding of regular dialogues with Aumentado.

Guillermo Reyes, Kamada spokesperson, said the residents were aware of the real situation and were adversely affected by the unabated illegal fishing activities.

Reyes said the group presented a consolidated list of fishermen involved in the illegal fishing activities in the respective areas.

He said Kamada was still validating the names of politicians who benefited from the illegal fishing activities.

In a press conference held after the dialogue with Aumentado, Kamada leaders said the CLEC has been insufficient in patrolling the seas.

"It would be good if the CLEC seaborne patrol visit our area once a month," a Kamada leader from Getafe town said.

230 Pampanga families flee their communities

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO—About 230 families started fleeing Barangay Kamias in Porac, Pampanga on Wednesday amid continued military operations, an Aeta leader said.

Nelson Mallari, secretary general of the Central Luzon Aeta Association (CLAA), said the families evacuated from Sitios Balangkas, Sentro and Barsola to Barangay Planas, where they have relatives.

Mallari said he slipped past a military checkpoint in Barangay Pasbul on Thursday morning. He reported the evacuation before noon Thursday.

Col. Herbert Yambing, commander of the Army's 69th Infantry Battalion, confirmed the evacuation but said these were prompted by a plan of the New People's Army to attack Army soldiers in Kamias and later the Sweet Crystals, the country's biggest sugar mill also in Porac.

"Two days before the Somo (suspension of offensive military operations), we have sighted a large band of NPA rebels in Wacap (San Marcelino, Zambales) moving toward Porac and so we conducted operations," Yambing told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

According to him, the rebels, not government troopers, had threatened the Aeta families to leave the villages.

"The rebels are not honoring the government's Somo. We wouldn't be doing operations if the rebels are not in an offensive position," Yambing said.

He said the evacuation occurred amid the rice harvest period.

The government has declared a Christmas ceasefire from Dec. 10 to Jan. 6, 2004. The National Democratic Front's national council, on the other hand, announced the implementation of a ceasefire from Dec. 20 to Jan. 4.

The Aeta leaders said soldiers instructed them to take orders only from military commanders in the area.

In a related development, Lt. Gen. Romeo Dominguez, commander of the Army's Northern Luzon Command, said he had ordered Lt. Gen. Alberto Braganza, chief of the Army's 7th Infantry Division, to conduct a "formal inquiry" on reports of human rights violations by soldiers in Pampanga and Zambales.

Col. Domingo Tutaan, commander of the 24th Infantry Battalion, also denied that his troops based in Barangay Nabuklod, Floridablanca, Pampanga, have committed abuses against Aeta residents there.

"The people there love us," he said. *Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk*

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PDI writer bags 3 Ford journ awards

From page A1

year, is part of the commitment of Ford Motor Company Philippines to recognize journalists who have supported the automotive industry by providing consumers with accurate news reports and information.

102 entries

This year, there were a total of 102 entries. The other categories were: Best Online Feature Story, Best Published Photograph for Magazine, Best Published Photograph for Broadsheet, Best Auto TV Feature, Best Ford Feature Story and Best Ford Centennial Story.

"The outdoorsy executive's guardian angel on wheels," published on Sept. 11, extols the safety features of the Volvo XC70. It explains in clear, easy-to-understand terms the outstanding details of the Volvo—from why the plastic fenders are painted black to the innovative firmness of the steering wheel.

Balanced

While praise is heaped upon the automobile, the article still comes out as balanced, the Ford Awards said.

"Relics of war reborn; thanks to RP ingenuity," published on June 12, praises the jeepney. The Ford Awards said the article was admirable for its scope and detail, and for giving readers a better understanding why the jeep has captured the imagination of so many people.

Racing

"Groundwork for future drivers starts with a joystick," published on June 19, is a feature on the Tuason Racing School and gives an insight on what it takes to be a racing enthusiast. The article implies that with proper training, Filipinos can be world-class champions.

The other winners: Best Online Feature Story, "Driving in a downpour" by Lester Dizon, Autoindustriya.com; Best Published Photograph for Magazine, "Splash and dash" by James Deakin, C! Magazine; Best Published Photograph for Broadsheet, "Wet track demo" by Lester Dizon, Philippine Star.

Best Auto TV Feature, "Break in: The 2003 Nissan Frontier 4x4, 4x2" by Auto Extreme, RPN 9; Best Ford Feature, "Ford Everest ride and drive in Thailand" by Auto Review, NBN 4; Best Ford Centennial Story, "100 great years, 10 amazing Fords: A sampling of vehicles that makes Ford great" by Jason Ang, Motioncars.com.

Something wrong with Robot's kidney

CAPTURED Abu Sayyaf leader Galib Andang has another health problem to worry about: a kidney ailment.

Andang, whose severely wounded left leg was amputated late Tuesday night, is registering a high level of creatinin, according to doctors at the V. Luna Medical Center in Quezon City.

"[Creatinin] is a substance that we monitor ... If this goes up, there is something wrong inside the kidney. If that further elevates, there is really something wrong with the kidney," Col. Rafael Regino, military surgeon-general, said yesterday.

The creatinin level of Andang, alias Commander Robot, rose to 350 but dropped to 271, which is very much higher than the normal level of 5, Regino said.

In Kuala Lumpur, Malaysian police said they wanted to question Andang about his supposed role in the kidnapping raids on Malaysian resorts in 2000.

Ramli Yusuff, police chief in Sabah state where the kidnappings took place, said Andang could provide information that could prevent similar attacks in the future.

"We need to know how he gained entry, his preparations, and things like that," Ramli was quoted as saying by the national news agency Bernama.

Andang is accused of numerous abductions during the past decade, including the April 2000 abduction of 21 people, including Western tourists, from the Sipadan island resort in Sabah. Abu Sayyaf members raided another resort on Malaysia's Pandanan island in September 2000, abducting three Malaysians. *Reports from TJ Burgonio in Manila; AP*

Women ...

From page A1

filibusteros—enemies marked for denunciation and night arrest.

Consequently, it was both startling and provocative that an unlikely group of young and traditionally self-effacing women would defy the powerful *fraile*.

In fact, the friars had long ignored a standing royal decree for the language to be taught in the archipelago. They rued the fact that scions of the native *principalia* (elite), after studying in Manila or abroad and mastering the Castilian tongue, invariably became an impertinent gang of malcontents.

But for the new generation of enlightened young Filipinos, these *ilustrados*—with their exposure to freedom and liberal ideas from Europe—had sparked an innate desire for change. At last the friars were seen as the true perpetrators of slavery and the biggest obstacle to reforms. The youth began to challenge them and expose their abuses.

'Noli' banned

The friars feared that granting the request of the Women of Malolos would boost the same "misguided enlightenment." Only the previous year, Jose Protacio Rizal, that presumptuous arriviste, had dared publish his "Noli Me Tangere."

Attacks from the pulpit on the anti-clergy novel only increased demand for the book, and people who read it became edgy. The book was banned.

A night school for young women was definitely less incendiary, but its effect could be just as disturbing, the friars decided. The seemingly innocuous little request had to be nipped in the bud.

School opened, closed

Undaunted, Uitangcoy's group waited for a more opportune time. It came when Governor General Valeriano Weyler visited Malolos during his official tour of Bulacan.

Bypassing the friar-curate, the *gobernadorcillo* and the provincial *alcalde*, the resolute Women of Malolos brought their suit directly to the unsuspecting governor general through a letter dated Dec. 12, 1888. In just two weeks the petition, which conformed to the royal decree, was granted.

The night school opened in early January 1889 under the guidance and support of Teodoro Sandico, a teacher from Pandacan who had helped draft the women's letter. But soon, Sandico became another dangerous *filibustero*. Accused of immoral teachings and eating meat during Lent, he fled the country to escape arrest. The night school closed in May of the same year.

Beyond Malolos

In any case, the Women of Malolos had fired the first shot, a call that resonated beyond Malolos. In Barcelona, Graciano Lopez-Jaena extolled their bravery in the maiden issue of "La Solidaridad" on Feb. 15, 1889. One week later, urged by Marcelo del Pilar, Rizal, already a leader of the reform movement, wrote his now- famous Tagalog epistolary "Sa mga Kababayang Dalaga sa Malolos."

By this time, Rizal had been disabused of his early impression that the young women of his beloved country were like "faded plants sown and reared in darkness." Acknowledging his mistake, Rizal now declared: "No longer does the Filipina stand with her head bowed, nor does she spend her time on her knees, because she is quickened by hope in the future."

Defiance

The Women of Malolos came to symbolize the fresh, questing spirit of the period. In time, their defiance would be manifest in the battlefields of the 1896 Revolution. Trinidad Tecson, Marcela Marcelo, Teresa Magbanua and Gregoria Montoya, would take the sword and ride with their brothers in the great war that would deliver the first Philippine Republic.

Like "Noli Me Tangere's" Maria Clara, who rose from meekness to self-assertion, defied Padre Damaso and spurned a loveless marriage, the Women of Malolos refused mindless obedience and demanded to be educated. Thus, they paved the way for the coming political storm.

Redemption

In less than a decade, the quest for national redemption would spread with the ferocity of a forest fire. Through sheer bravado, the 20 young women thus helped make Filipinos the forerunners of the freedom movement in all of colonized Asia. The Women of Malolos deserve to be remembered and revered.

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GMA, Koizumi set talks on trade partnership

From page A1

agreement (EPA) between the Philippines and Japan during her state visit in May 2002.

In 2002, Japan's trade with the Philippines reached $1.74 billion, or 14 percent of its trade with all of Asean.

Largest exporter

Japan is the largest exporter to the Philippines and its second biggest importer after the United States. The Philippines' main exports to Japan are semiconductors and electronic machinery, while it imports mostly parts for electronic machinery and cars.

Ms Macapagal also said she was supportive of Koizumi's proposal to establish a greater economic community in East Asia, that would include Asean, Japan, China, Australia and China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

"That will be very powerful indeed, because if we have Japan, which is the biggest economy in Asia, and then we have China, which has the biggest population in the world, then that will be a very formidable community indeed," Ms Macapagal said.

She said Manila was looking at an EPA with Tokyo to open the doors for more Filipino workers, specifically caregivers and nurses, to Japan—a potential market for Filipino health care workers because of its growing population of elderly.

No. 1 ODA source

"I shall ask Japan Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi to help us open more jobs for our caregivers in Japan," Ms Macapagal said. "I will meet our workers who are already here to thank them for bringing great pride for our country and for their solid contributions to the economy."

Ms Macapagal and Koizumi also reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to beef up peace and security in the region and to cooperate further in the fight against terrorism.

"All the leaders of Asean are here to reaffirm their commitment to fair and open trade and collective security together with Japan which is our No. 1 source of ODA (official development assistance)," she said.

More Japanese loans

For his part, Koizumi reiterated Tokyo's commitment to assist the Philippine government in its efforts to bring peace and development in Mindanao.

The state-run Japan Bank for International Cooperation yesterday signed a loan to the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao Social Fund for Peace and Development.

The ARMM loan worth $19.8 million would be used to finance small projects for social and economic infrastructure in Mindanao to be disbursed over the next seven years.

The JBIC loan would be used to finance small scale projects for social and economic infrastructure in Mindanao aimed at reducing poverty, strengthening institutional capacity, and promoting sustainable peace in war-torn areas. The assistance program for the ARMM is expected to continue in stages up to year 2010.

Power plants

JBIC also pledged to lend the Philippines a total of $415.5 million in loans to bankroll the construction of power plants in Mindanao and the Visayas, and the establishment of the country's first spot market for electricity.

The loan agreements, aimed at ensuring sufficient power supply and allow consumers to buy power at lower costs, were signed at the Imperial Hotel by Philippine Ambassador to Japan Domingo L. Siazon Jr. and JBIC Governor Kyosuke Shinozawa. Ms Macapagal witnessed the signing.

Coal plant

The bulk of the loans or $307 million would be extended to the Filipino-German consortium, State Power Development Corp., which will undertake the construction of a 200-megawatt coal-fired plant at the Phividec Industrial Estate in Misamis Oriental.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez said the coal plant would address the growing power requirements of Mindanao. "This project is very critical for Mindanao and a boost to investor confidence in the Philippines," Perez said. Part of the project cost would be financed by KFW of Germany.

Loans for Visayas

JBIC has also agreed to grant $68.5 million for the Leyte-Cebu Interconnection Uprating Project that would lay down a 33-km submarine cable and put up substations that would bring 200 megawatts additional geothermal power from Leyte to power-hungry Cebu.

Perez said the project was vital in ensuring stable and cheap power supply in Cebu as it would double current power supply in the Visayas region from 200 megawatts at present.

Software/hardware

JBIC approved the grant of $40 million in loans for the purchase of computer software and hardware needed to start the Philippine Wholesale Electricity Spot Market, the second country to have electricity trading in Asean. This spot market, which should start by June next year, would allow big power users such as industries, utility firms and cooperatives to bid for their power needs from a broader number of suppliers.

"We have been waiting for this in the last two years, and finally it's happening. This will create a stock market for power generation which should ultimately lead to lower power rates for end-users," Perez said.

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December

1-31 Christmas Light-Up 2003 • 1-7 Hari Raya Light-Up 2003 • 5 World Wrestling Entertainment • 7 David Tao Zhe - Soul Power Asia Tour 2003 • 7 Standard Chartered Singapore Marathon 2003 • 12 Singapore Symphony Orchestra - Christmas Carol Concert - Handel's Messiah • 16 Duran Duran 78-03 'LIVE' in Singapore • 19-20 Singapore Symphony Orchestra - Christmas Concert • 25 Christmas • 21-28 Dance India Taste India • 31 Countdown to 2004

January

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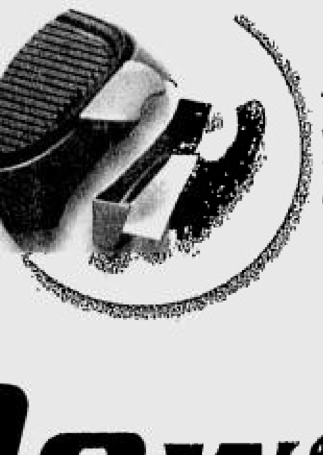

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Book says Erap exec got P2M of Abu loot

From page A1

that her husband "did not get a single centavo from the government."

"What are we going to do with such loose change?" she said.

Grabbing credit

In his book to be launched today, Aventajado said the efforts of politicians like Wee to grab credit for the release of the hostages lengthened the latter's days in captivity.

He also wrote of how private funds coming from friends of Estrada were used for ransom or for reimbursement of negotiation expenses, such as the P2 million that Wee supposedly took.

"I was really wondering where I would get the money for everything that the government could only deny doing—paying ransom in the teeth of the universal prohibition against doing it," Aventajado wrote. "But, ever the clever businessman, [Wee] was reimbursed and managed to squeeze an extra million for what he had claimed were incidentals."

Aventajado also did not hide his antipathy toward Wee, whom he accused of "spreading the rumor that I had pocketed some of the ransom money."

Along with Estrada and then Armed Forces Chief of Staff Angelo Reyes, Aventajado is accused of skimming off part of the $25 million in ransom that the Libyan government had given for the release of the remaining European hostages.

Aventajado has in turn pointed the accusing finger at his fellow negotiators, then Libyan Ambassador to the Philippines Abdurazak Rajab Azzarouq and Mohammad Ismail.

'His alone'

Aventajado also said efforts to secure the release of the Malaysians were complicated by bickering.

Wee had "acquired a proprietary attitude toward the Malaysians—they were his and his alone, to be rescued only to his everlasting credit," Aventajado wrote.

He said Wee, then eyeing the mayoral post of Zamboanga City, went against Estrada's wishes to collect the hostages and turn them over to the Malaysian Embassy.

At one time, Aventajado recalled, he had to stop a private Malaysian plane from landing in Zamboanga because Wee had arranged for it to bring the hostages to Malaysia, where he hoped to get exclusive credit for the task.

"Fancying himself a feudal lord in the area, he gave free rein to his natural inclination to put everyone else down so as to exalt himself," Aventajado wrote.

Scapegoat

Speaking on her mobile phone, Cely Wee said Aventajado was using her husband as a scapegoat, purportedly in anticipation of captured Abu Sayyaf leader Galib Andang a.k.a. Commander Robot spilling the beans.

"He is afraid that people will find [Andang] more credible when he starts telling his own version of how the ransom money was stolen," she said in Chavacano, the dialect spoken in Zamboanga.

The Zamboanga-based Wee's business empire—estimated to be worth hundreds of millions of pesos—one of the pioneers in the seaweed manufacturing and export business in the country.

But in his book, Aventajado also questioned the source of Wee's wealth, and described Wee as "the man who would be king but forgot the world isn't always a big laundry."

"He had generated plenty of criticism not only about his business methods but also about the business he was suspected to be in, among them, drugs. No one had been able to prove his connection to the illegal drug trade, but in Manila the media's lack of proof can never be allowed to get in the way of a racy story," Aventajado wrote in the chapter titled "Ransom blows our minds."

Aventajado also said Wee earned his "empty" presidential-adviser title from Estrada for "picking up the tab for the 1998 presidential campaign in Zamboanga City, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi."

The Department of Foreign Affairs will try to obtain information from the diplomatic community to ascertain reported violations of the Philippines' no-ransom policy during negotiations for the release of the foreigners abducted by the Abu Sayyaf.

"Any piece of information is important, so the government can [take] some steps," Acting Secretary Franklin Ebdalin said.

But he said any violation would not necessarily result in a protest or sanction.

"If the Philippines wants to put more teeth to the no-ransom policy, then it has to be legislated into law. There is no law on the no-ransom policy so there are no sanctions. The government is incapacitated to act on such allegations, proven or not," Ebdalin said. *With a report from Jerome Aning*

Amla seeks freeze of kidnappers' loot

From page A1

As of end of November, the council had conducted examinations involving 32 drug-related cases, four linked to kidnapping and six involving terrorism. Fourteen of the cases did not require prior court approval, according to Aquino.

Inquiry before freeze

"The focus of AMLC now is to conduct an inquiry into all these accounts before we apply with the court for freeze orders. We are doing both almost simultaneously," he said.

Accounts linked to kidnapping and terrorism are among the limited predicate crimes in the amended Anti-Money Laundering Act that can be frozen by the council without a court order. The other crimes are plunder, robbery and extortion, *jueteng* and *masiao*, piracy on the high seas, swindling, smuggling, violation of the Electronic Commerce Act, hijacking, violation of the Securities Regulation Code, qualified theft and graft and corrupt practices.

Aquino refused to divulge details of the investigation as it would undermine efforts of the council to curtail the flow of dirty money. Not even the amounts of the web of accounts could be disclosed, he said.

The executive director said the examination of these deposits was part of the council's evidence-gathering process to strengthen the criminal cases it would soon file before various courts.

The probe seeks to establish the probable cause and the direct link between the laundered funds and the criminal activities from which these came from.

"In the meantime, we are preparing the necessary pleadings. We can at the same time examine related bank accounts so that we can finalize the applications for freezing," Aquino said.

87 cases

The council is also looking into violations of the Securities Regulation Code. Of the 87 cases under investigation, 58 involve swindling and estafa and one involves robbery. Aquino said 86 cases did not involve any unlawful activities.

The examinations stemmed from 274 suspicious transactions reported by covered institutions regulated by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, the Securities and Exchange Commission and the Insurance Commission.

Suspicious transactions

Aquino noted that as of Nov. 30, the council had received leads on 332 suspicious transactions and 315,433 covered transaction reports from various financial institutions.

The AMLC also received 51 requests for mutual assistance from local parties and 29 requests from abroad.

Pyramid scams

As of last month, the council had frozen 448 bank accounts containing P1.085 billion, almost P1 billion of which was dollar-denominated. Of these, the AMLC had returned about P700,000 to investors, mostly victims of pyramid scams.

Fifty-one freeze orders had been issued while almost 3,000 suspicious transaction reports have yet to be evaluated. The council had also acted on 61 requests for mutual assistance.

Laundering cases

The council has filed six money laundering cases with the Ombudsman, the justice department and regional trial courts, according to Aquino.

He said five petitions for the extension of freeze orders had been filed with the appellate court while 21 civil forfeiture cases involving almost P100 million had been filed with various courts.

Council officials led by Aquino met with International Monetary Fund representatives early this week to discuss the country's efforts to curb the flow of illegal funds.

Still on list

The country is expecting to be removed by late 2004 from the Financial Action Task Force's list of countries considered not doing enough to fight money laundering. The Philippines has been on the list since 2000.

The country is still awaiting the results of the evaluation conducted by the Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering.

Aquino said he told IMF officials that the country was in the second stage of the de-listing process, which is the implementation of Republic Act No. 9194 or the amended Anti-Money Laundering Act. "I told IMF representatives that... we are proceeding to the third and final stage."

Camacho: Change political system

From page A1

by corruption, bureaucratic red tape and a peace and order problem.

Camacho wished he could hear from the presidential aspirants about their specific proposals on how to address what he believes are the country's most pressing economic issues—a fiscal crisis, looming energy shortage, damaged banking system and poor governance.

"There are reforms which they should start talking about instead of nonsense," the former finance secretary said.

Camacho said Filipinos should choose leaders who would be ready to face enormous challenges and who have the "ability to comprehend and courage to do what is necessary."

I candidate is it

A good leader, he said, should have competence, integrity, courage, among others. He believes there is one candidate who fits the billed though he refused to identify him or her.

He said the economy was in fiscal crisis due to huge debts but that it would stay afloat in the run-up to the elections next May. "We are resilient. We will survive. We will not go under," he said. "But will that be enough?"

He said the national government's debt—which hit nearly $58 billion as of September—was causing concern.

No regrets

Camacho resigned last month, citing exhaustion with the job and sparking a fall in the peso to a record low against the dollar as markets worried that the respected secretary's departure would hurt government efforts to limit its debt mountain.

He said he had no regrets serving government and would be willing one day to consider taking a government post again. *With reports from Elena R. Torrijos and Reuters*

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Manhood severed over text message

ANTONIO Llanerisas, 30, came home to Western Bicutan, Taguig, early yesterday morning believing all was well.

At around 10 a.m., however, a stinging pain in his groin area woke him up and he saw his wife holding up his bloodied manhood.

The wife claimed that she only cut off his supposed infidelity after she read a text message on his cell phone purportedly from his "other woman." *Margaux Ortiz*

108 deportees arriving from US

By Leila Salaverria

ONE HUNDRED eight Filipinos will be home from the United States in time for Christmas but it will not be an occasion for merrymaking.

The Filipinos, who will be arriving today on a chartered flight, are being deported for alleged involvement in crime.

The Interpol division of the National Bureau of Investigation was informed of the arrival, which had been scheduled for Dec. 9 but was moved to Dec. 12.

The oldest of the deportees is a 72-year-old man who was involved in homicide, while the youngest is a 15-year-old sex offender.

Most of the deportees are coming from California, while the rest are from Colorado, Arizona, Florida, Texas and New York.

The deportees' offenses include kidnapping, bank embezzlement, larceny, assault, drugs, carjacking, theft, assault on a law enforcer, child molestation, rape, cruelty to wife, mail fraud and alcohol violation.

Some, however, are listed as "non-criminal," which an NBI official said could signify that the Filipinos had committed visa violations or had overstayed.

If there is an arriving deportee who has a warrant in the country, he will be arrested once he lands on Philippine soil. Otherwise, he will be allowed to go home.

METROBRIEFS

LLDA has new head

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo appointed on Dec. 3 Maria Fatima Valdes as the new general manager and chief operating officer of the Laguna Lake Development Authority replacing Calixto Cataquiz. Cataquiz was replaced due to allegations of graft filed by LLDA employees. *Edgar Sombrano*

Manila passes P6-B budget

THE CITY Council passed yesterday Manila's "conservative" P5.9-billion budget for next year. The budget, which is P65 million higher than this year's allocation, was based on the anticipated tax and revenue collection of the city for 2004. The increase is due to higher electricity bills, additional employees and higher premiums for health workers. *Tarra Quismundo*

P15M in fake apparel

THE NATIONAL Bureau of Investigation, in cooperation with the Carag Caballes Jamora and Somera law office, seized over P15 million worth of fake Louis Vuitton products in Manila over the year. The fake goods were seized from the New Divisoria mall, the Juan Luna mall, and in Quiapo, Sta. Cruz, Tutuban and Binondo. *Leila Salaverria*

WPD election watch begins

FIVE months before the elections, the Western Police District has begun monitoring election-related violence in Manila. Incidents ranging from kidnappings to arguments over candidates will be recorded to help determine possible election hotspots in the city. "The elections are very important. We need to start beefing up security and making plans to prevent violence from erupting," WPD director Pedro Bulaong said yesterday. *Leila Salaverria*

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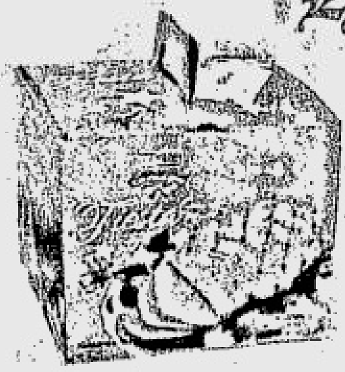
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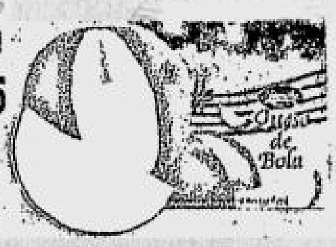
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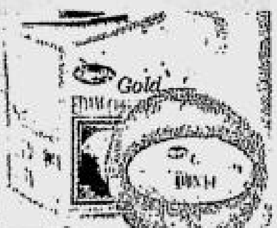
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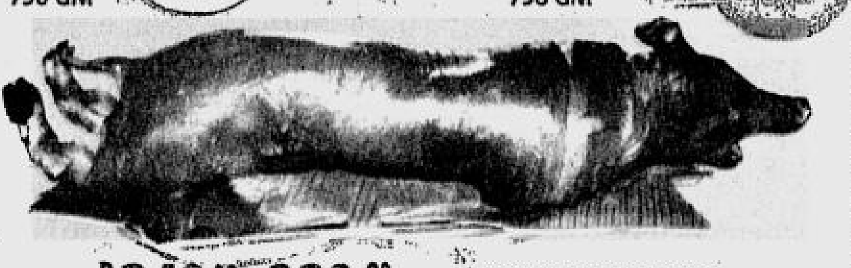
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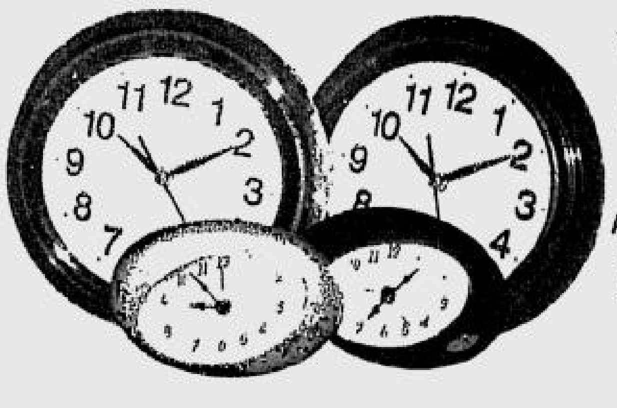
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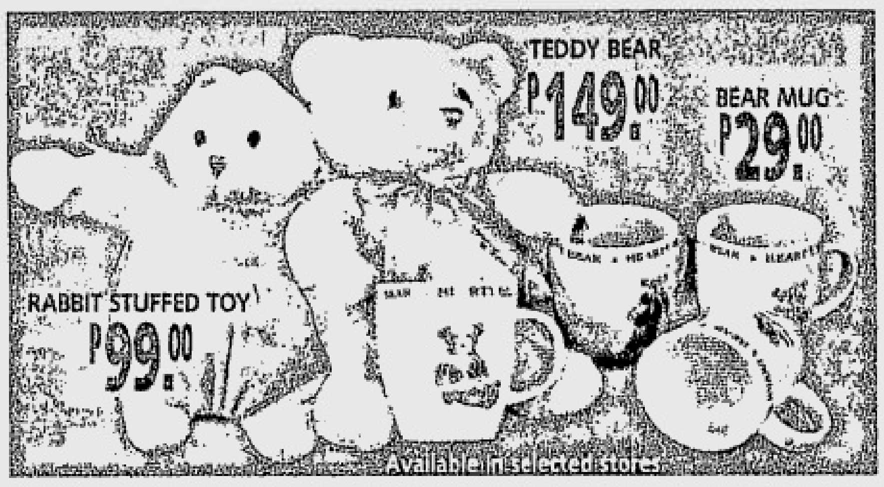
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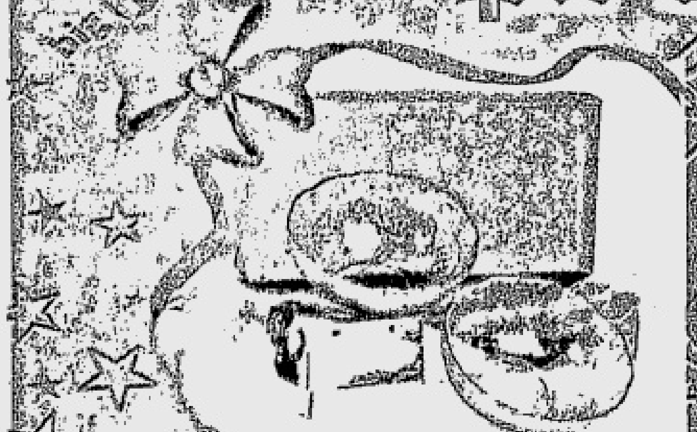
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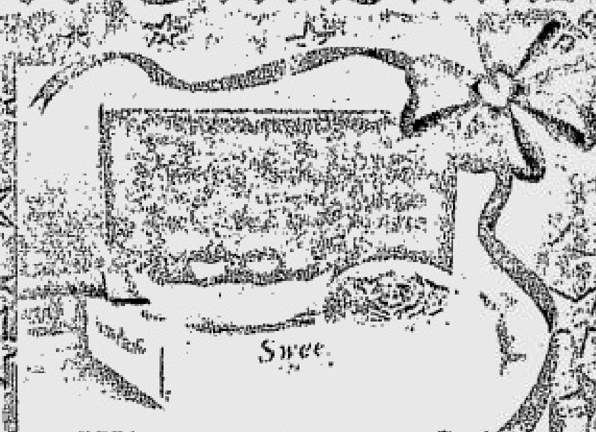
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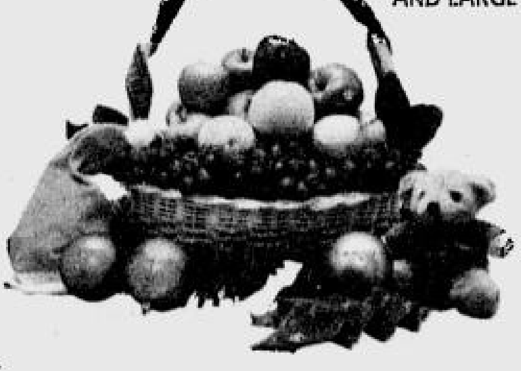

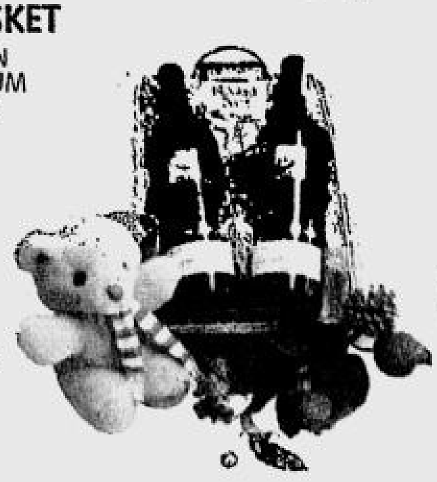

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PHILIPPINE Marines, with their belongings in tow, report to the Western Police District headquarters in Manila. The soldiers will help police man the checkpoints set up in key parts of Metro Manila.

ERIK ARAZAS

Checkpoints are here to stay, says NCRPO

By Christian Esguerra and Leila Salaverria

DIRECTOR Ricardo de Leon, chief of the National Capital Region Police Office, yesterday announced that police and military units would continue setting up checkpoints until kidnap gangs and other crime groups have been substantially suppressed.

This may mean that the checkpoint may stay "forever and ever," de Leon told the INQUIRER.

The security measure has proved to be effective not only against organized crime groups but also against snatchers and pickpockets, De Leon said.

He noted that there had been no kidnapping or bank robbery incidents since the mobile checkpoints were set up four days ago in key parts of Metro Manila.

"Based on the responses that we have been getting," De Leon said, "the people are also happy with the checkpoints because they make them feel very safe."

Yesterday, Western Police District director Chief Supt. Pedro Bulaong tried to allay fears that citizens briefly detained at checkpoints run the risk of having their rights violated.

Bulaong said that there are at least four conditions that must be met before authorities could frisk passengers. He said drivers and passengers of vehicles with heavily tinted windows must be checked out, along with those riding in a vehicles with no license plates.

Also, if all the passengers happen to be male, the police have the right to question them. He said men in uniform, especially those armed, must also be frisked and made to explain where they are going.

Bulaong said that there was nothing wrong with the action of Station 4 commander Supt. Manolo Martinez, who was caught on camera frisking a man. Bulaong said Martinez had to check out the man because he was driving a heavily tinted van and all his passengers were male, carrying bags.

FIELD TRIP ACCIDENT

School blamed for girl's death

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

A COUPLE on Friday allowed their daughter to join her classmates in a field trip, and entrusted her to her teachers. But the daughter never came back alive.

Now the parents of Jusmine Venice Mendoza, 12, a Grade 6 student of the St. James Academy in Malabon City, are crying for justice.

Jusmine died when she fell off a vehicle—made to look like a pre-war streetcar—during a field trip in Corregidor Island.

She allegedly dropped her socks and, when she reached for them, she fell off the speeding vehicle and hit the ground head first.

From Corregidor, Jusmine was taken to the Manila Doctors Hospital.

According to the mother, Elenita, Jusmine reached the hospital two hours after the accident.

When Elenita and her husband Ronnel reached the hospital, Jusmine was in the emergency room, her whole face swollen. Jusmine, the eldest of two children, died later that day.

The couple are now blaming school officials for holding a field trip without making the necessary preparations. They claimed the teachers did not even have a first aid kit at their disposal.

The INQUIRER yesterday went to the St. James Academy in Malabon and tried to talk to the school officials. But a female security officer at the gate said that the school officials were not yet ready for an interview. She added that the officials have yet to issue a statement concerning the accident.

Ronnel said Jusmine could have survived had she been given immediate treatment.

During an interview at the Floresco Funeral Homes, Ronnel said that he learned from the doctors that Jusmine's condition got worse when the level of oxygen in her brain dropped. From the time of the accident until Jusmine was taken to the hospital two hours later, the girl did not receive any oxygen or even first aid, Ronnel said.

Elenita said the school should have brought with them nurses or first aid experts.

"There was gross negligence," Ronnel said. The (field trip coordinators) should have known what to do during emergencies."

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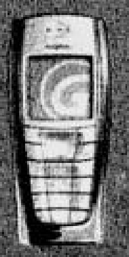

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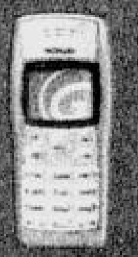

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BASKETBALL: NBA-Pistons vs Cavs; 8:30 a.m. (r-9 p.m.); Star Sports; Spurs vs Rockets; 9:30 a.m. (r-8 p.m.); Solar Sports—Detroit visits Cleveland while Midwest Conference rivals San Antonio and Houston engage in a Texas shootout.

NBA Greatest Games-Lakers vs Suns, Game 6, 1984 Western Conference Finals; 12 noon; Solar Sports—Los Angeles and Phoenix engage in one of the more memorable playoff battles in the west.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.

SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2003

SPORTS

E-mail: pr_sports@inquirer.com.ph

Editor **Teddyvic S. Melendres**
Assistant Editor **Edwin M. Villanueva**

RP a win from cage crown

By Roy Luarca

HO CHI MINH—The value of the point guard was highlighted Thursday night as RP-Cebuana Lhuillier struggled past Indonesia, 75-70, in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games basketball competition at the Khuan Khu 7 Stadium here.

Forced to play sans a playmaker in one stretch of the fourth quarter, the

RP/ A30

GEISLER (left) tags Thit Lwin of Myanmar with a roundhouse kick in the semifinals. EDWIN BACASMAS

Filipinos still fifth overall with 35 golds

By Ernesto Gonzales

HANOI—The Philippines, reeling back from three stinging setbacks in athletics, turned to taekwondo, wushu and fencing as major sources of its eight gold medals Thursday and remained fifth overall going into the last two days of the 22nd Southeast Asian Games here.

The three martial arts sports contributed a total of seven victories to go with the triumph of hammer thrower Arniel Ferrera in athletics as the Filipinos moved within five wins of reaching its minimum target of 40 golds.

With top athletics stars Eduardo Buenavista, John Lozada and Ernie Candelario going down in defeat at the National Stadium, the Filipinos still managed to raise their golden collection to 35.

Fourth-running Malaysia was just two golds ahead with 37.

Vietnam had the overall title all locked up with 106 golds. Thailand was second with 77 and Indonesia third with 45.

Lightweight Donald Geisler III and middleweights Margarita Bonifacio and Dax Morfe raised taekwondo's gold count to four Thursday night in a mighty comeback by the jins.

Willy Wang (taolo-qiangshu) and Arvin Ting (taolo-gunshu) scored for wushu while Walbert Mendoza triumphed in men's saber along with the men's foil team.

The first taekwondo gold came from Veronica Domingo late Wednesday as she retained her title in the women's lightweight division.

The 22-year-old Domingo, a Far Eastern University mass communications graduate, downed Vietnam's Phuong Quyen, 2-0, as she made up for a string of opening-day losses that, among others, saw the veteran Roberto Cruz fail in his bid for a record seventh straight finweight gold.

Geisler duplicated his victory in the 1999 Brunei Games by outpointing Rizal Samsir of Indonesia while Domingo beat Che Chew Chan of Malaysia. Morfe came from behind to win by superiority over Vietnam's Phan Tan Dat.

Mendoza, 24, and lone fencing winner in Malaysia, prevailed over Thai Wiradech Kothny. Rolando Canlas Jr., Ramil Endriano, Ruperto Endriano and Emerson Segui made up the champion foil squad.

Ferrera, 22, from Cauayan, Negros Occidental, accounted for the 30th gold that allowed the Filipinos to pass Malaysia for fourth place in the morning as he flung the men's hammer to a winning distance of 55.28 meters on his fourth attempt.

But the three-gold romp expected in athletics in the afternoon became a bronze-silver-silver finish.

Lozada, the winner of the men'ss 1,500m Tuesday, was overwhelmed by two Vietnam runners in the finals of the 800 and Buenavista, who won the 10,000m gold Monday, was humbled by Thailand's Boonthung Saisung in the 5,000-m final.

And the men's 4x400-relay squad led by 400-m champion Ernie Candelario could only finish second behind an unheralded Thailand quartet.

Buenavista, who ruled the 10,000 Monday, and Lozada were defending their respective titles won in Malaysia two years ago.

Also at Ho Chi Minh, the national cagers recovered from a sloppy start to edge Indonesia, 75-70, and move within a victory—against Malaysia on Saturday—to sweep the basketball gold medal.

The cagerettes earlier blasted Vietnam, 55-47, to raise its record to 3-1.

A silver by Paul Brian Rosario in individual skeet (112) was the best the shooters could show for the day.

Tac Padilla placed ninth in the 25-m center fire pistol while Luz Samaco (370), Susan Aguado (368) and Therese Cantada (367) were ninth, 10th and 12th, respectively in the 10-m air pistol.

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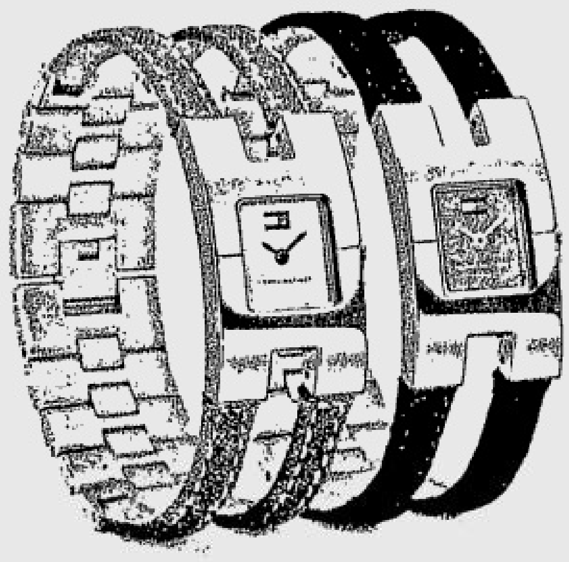
Thailand	76	71	73	220
Indonesia	45	51	64	160
Malaysia	37	34	45	116
Philippines	33	35	52	120
Singapore	24	28	31	83
Myanmar	7	33	38	78
Laos	1	5	9	15
Cambodia	1	3	10	14
Brunei	1	1	6	8
East Timor	0	0	0	0



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‘We were robbed’

Boxing coaches deplore bum officiating

By Roy Luarca

HO CHI MINH—Filipino boxing coaches are angry.

They deplored the bum officiating in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games and cried for an overhaul of the regional boxing system.

“*Sobra talaga.* Radical changes *ang kailangan* (It’s too much. Radical changes are needed),” said coaches Boy Velasco and Pat Gaspi after Wednesday night’s boxing finals which saw five Filipinos bow to their Thai rivals, leaving lightflyweight Harry Tañamor as RP’s lone gold medalist.

Pinweight Juanito Magliquian, bantam Joan Tipon, feather Roel Laguna, lightwelter Florencio Ferrer and welter Mark Jason Melligen settled for silvers. Middleweight Christopher Camat settled for a bronze.

While admitting that 17-year-old Melligen was indeed beaten by his experienced Thai foe (Manus Boonjumnong), Velasco felt that the others could have won had the officiating been fair.

“*Pinagkakatay tayo rito* (We were robbed),” rued Velasco. “*Kailangang huwag nang maulit ito* (This must stop).”

If the gallery’s reaction to some results were to be the basis, Velasco may be right.

Plastic water bottles and other debris rained on the ring shortly after the hand of Sayota Pichai (Ferrer’s opponent) was raised, while a foreign television crew cut short its broadcast and left the Phan Dinh Pung Stadium in a huff.

Expectedly, majority of the Filipino gallery also left the venue, angry and frustrated about the perceived raw deal their compatriots had received.

Especially Magliquian and Laguna.

Magliquian was raising his hand at his corner while Kaeo Pongprayoon looked forlorn when they were called to the center of the ring. Both were stunned when the Thai was declared the winner.

Laguna was edged by Sutthisak Samaksaman, 19-18, raising howls of protest.

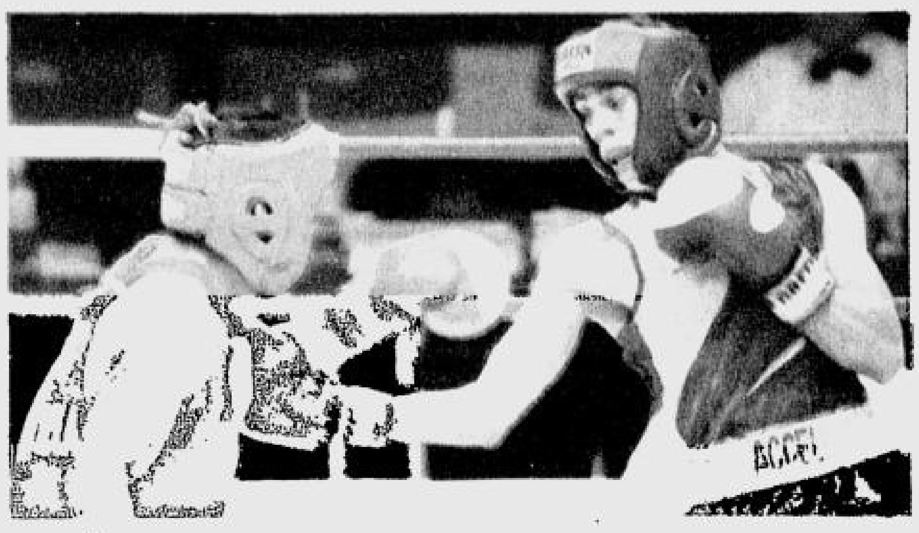
The awarding ceremonies got delayed for several minutes as the pelting continued in the presence of Prof. Anwar Chowdry, president of the Amateur International Basketball Association.

Manny Lopez, president of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines, was more diplomatic: “This is only a temporary setback. We have bigger challenges ahead like the Olympics.”

Asked about the officiating, Lopez said the fights involving Magliquian and Laguna “could have been ours.”

The Thais kept the overall title with seven golds, one silver and one bronze.

The Filipinos came in second after improving on their 0-2-5 tally in the 2001 Kuala Lumpur SEAG.



TAÑAMOR (above right) connects with a right uppercut to the body of his Indonesian foe, Rionando Butar Butar, whom he whipped, 32-9, for the 48-kg gold. EDWIN BACASMAS

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Pakistan’s Chowdry turns Games into carnival of crooks

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

HANOI—Close to the end of competitions yesterday, the Philippines did not anymore look too hungry for gold, the way it did two years ago in Kuala Lumpur.

There continues to come glory moments for the RP contingent, mainly in athletics, while bigger joys were celebrated by Filipinos in unexpected venues like swimming and gymnastics, which used to be the scene of gloom for the country in the previous staging of this biennial meet among Southeast Asian neighbors.

The temperature suddenly turned from cool and crisp to downright chilling starting Tuesday here, with the barometer dipping to 15 degrees.

Now frantically wrapped in extra thick jacket, the visitor from Manila could only wonder about the rumor of snow in the mountains and nearby provinces.

The winter cold grazes the skin, causing numbness in the amazed fingers later.

Still, the most chilling, and definitely most hateful, event for the RP contingent happened Wednesday night at the Phan Dinh Phung Stadium in Ho Chi Minh City.

***

It involved Filipino boxers, trained hard for a whole year and who came here perfectly fit not only to make up for a gold shutout in KL in 2001, but to challenge the Thais for boxing supremacy in the region.

Thailand sent in eight fighters into the finals, while RP had six.

It could have easily been seven boxers apiece in the gold-medal night for both RP and Thailand had Cris Camat, who had demonstrated a sensational dominance of Manon Bonnjumnong in the semis, not been given a raw deal by the judges.

To signal off the gold hunt on Wednesday, pinweight Jake Magliquian, gold medalist in the 1999 Brunei Sea Games, toyed with Thailand's Kaeo Pongprayon for four rounds.

Now convinced like his handlers and countrymen that he had aptly earned the gold, Magliquian gave the crowd a big holiday salute at the final bell.

He was, however, crushed when the judges, who obviously counted the punches Magliquian had clearly landed against him, gave the gold to the battered Thai.

Magliquian kept shaking his cropped head during the medal ceremonies.

He also showed up in his sweaty fight jerseys, refusing to change to his official jacket as a sign of protest.

***

By the way, light flyweight Harry Tañamor was lucky that he did not have a Thai for a foe in the finals. He faced Indon Rionando Butar Butar which he predictably outclassed for what would turn out as RP’s lone boxing gold.

Joan Tipon lost his bout against Worapos Petchkoom and quietly settled for the silver.

But featherweight Roel Laguna, after a loose, tentative start, turned sensational and sharp in the final two rounds.

Naturally, the dusky, happy-faced warrior was expecting to be declared winner.

He, however, never stood a chance against the judges who again blindly refused to acknowledge Filipino boxing excellence.

After Laguna, the Philippines had already been cheated out of the gold at least three times, including that one involving Camat.

It was nearing breaking point, but members of the RP boxing team, together with officials and coaches, managed to smile off the injustice.

***

But after the clearest gold-medal hold-up, when lightweight Florencio Ferrer was declared loser to Thailand’s Pichai Sayota, who could barely stand up due to incessant battering at the final bell, Vietnamese fans themselves revolted.

They jumped up and pelted the judges with assorted debris.

There was bedlam. The proceedings had to be halted.

It was clear the hosts, who have been handling the events in joyful dignity and native warmth, could not stand to see the Games smeared and marred by criminal judging.

Your reporter here, working the bouts for Jemah Television with Chino, had no choice but mutiny and call off the boxing coverage.

Staying on would’ve meant we were approving the shameful actions by gangsters masquerading as boxing judges.

There was a near riot and it became clear Vietnam, which has labored hard to stage an honest and pleasant Games, did not want to see the boxing finals turn into a carnival of crooks.

***

Said Manny Lopez, president of the Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines: “Our boxers felt dejected. We are contemplating on elevating the issue to the International Olympic Committee. We did everything humanly possible for the Vietnam Games.”

In his capacity as secretary general for Asia of the Amateur International Boxing Association, Lopez said he would try to introduce reforms starting with the Olympic qualification tournament in Palawan in January.

That will not be easy. With the glaring absence of decency and honor in judging under the AIBA rule of Pakistan’s Anwar Chowdry, who presided at ringside here, no less than a revolution is needed for reforms to come to world amateur boxing.

Anyway, what continues to stand out in the eyes of the visitor from Manila is the absence here of flies, familiar fester back home.

No flashy cars and no beggars loitering the streets, either.

But the crime committed by Chowdry & Gang on the RP-Revicon boxing team continues to beg for justice as the Vietnam Games heads for its farewell day.

RP SCHEDULE

December 12, 2003, Thursday
Vietnam Time

Sepak Takraw (Hai Ba Trung Gymnasium)
Regular events
11 a.m.—Philippines vs Myanmar (M)
1 p.m.—Philippines vs Singapore (M)
3 p.m.—Philippines vs Indonesia (M)
4 p.m.—Philippines vs Indonesia (W)

Shooting (National Sports Training Center 1)
8 a.m.—25m Standard Pistol 3.20. M (Nathaniel Tac Padilla)

Traditional Boat Race (West Lake)
9:30 a.m.—1 000 (M)—Finals
3:10 p.m.—500 (M)—Heats

Volleyball (Nam Dinh-Ninh Binh)
2 p.m.—Philippines vs Thailand (W)
2 p.m.—Philippines vs Malaysia (M)
(Note: RP schedule depends on previous game result)

Wrestling (Ha Tay Gymnasium)
Freestyle (M & W)
9 a.m.—Edralyn Calitiz vs Nguyen Thi Hong Hanh of Vietnam (63kg). Violeto Agustin vs Rudiansyah of Indonesia (48kg). Luis Ansag vs Ngo Van Long of Vietnam (66kg). Michael Balein vs Pham Thanh Quyet of Vietnam (74kg). Marcus Valda vs Le Thanh Tieng (55kg). Botrida Lapuentes vs Nuth Sreyroth of Cambodia (56kg). Paulo de los Santos. vs Surianto of Indonesia (65kg)
3 p.m.—Cherry Mainz vs Pattana Promeam of Thailand (59kg). Jimmy Angana vs Khomekhe Thathavong of Laos (60kg)

Wushu (Trinh Hoai Duc Gymnasium)
Taolu
9 a.m.—Changquan. M (Willy Wang. Arvin Ting). Nandao. M (Pedro Ouina)
2:30 p.m.—Nanquan, W (Lily So). Nanquan, M (Pedro Ouina)
7:30 p.m.—Sanshou, M & W (Finals)

Ho Chi Minh

Taekwondo (Pho Tho Indoor Stadium)
Men
8 a.m.—Flyweight (54-58kg). Tshomlee Go. Heavyweight (over 84kg). Dax Alberto Morfe.
Women
Finweight (under 47kg). Eva Marie Ditan
Featherweight (55-59kg). Mary Rivero
7 p.m.—Finals (Note: RP schedules depend on elimination rounds results)

Badminton (Tan Binh Indoor Stadium)
All Finals
2:30 p.m.—Singles (M, W)
Doubles (M, W mixed)
(Note: RP schedule depends on result of previous game)

Billiards Snooker (Nguyen Du Sports Center)
Semifinals
10 a.m.—Snooker Singles (James Al Ortega/Marlon Manalo)
All Finals
7:30 p.m.—Snooker Singles
Cadre 47/1
(Note: RP schedule depends on result of previous game)

Chess (Vand Don Indoor Stadium)
9 a.m.—Standard Round 7
M (Rogelio Antonio Jr., Ronald Dableo, Mark Paragua, Eugenio Torre, Buenaventura Villamayor)
W (Kathryn Ann Cruz, Sheerie Joy Lomibao, Christine Mañano, Beverly Mendoza)
4:30 p.m.—Standard Round 8

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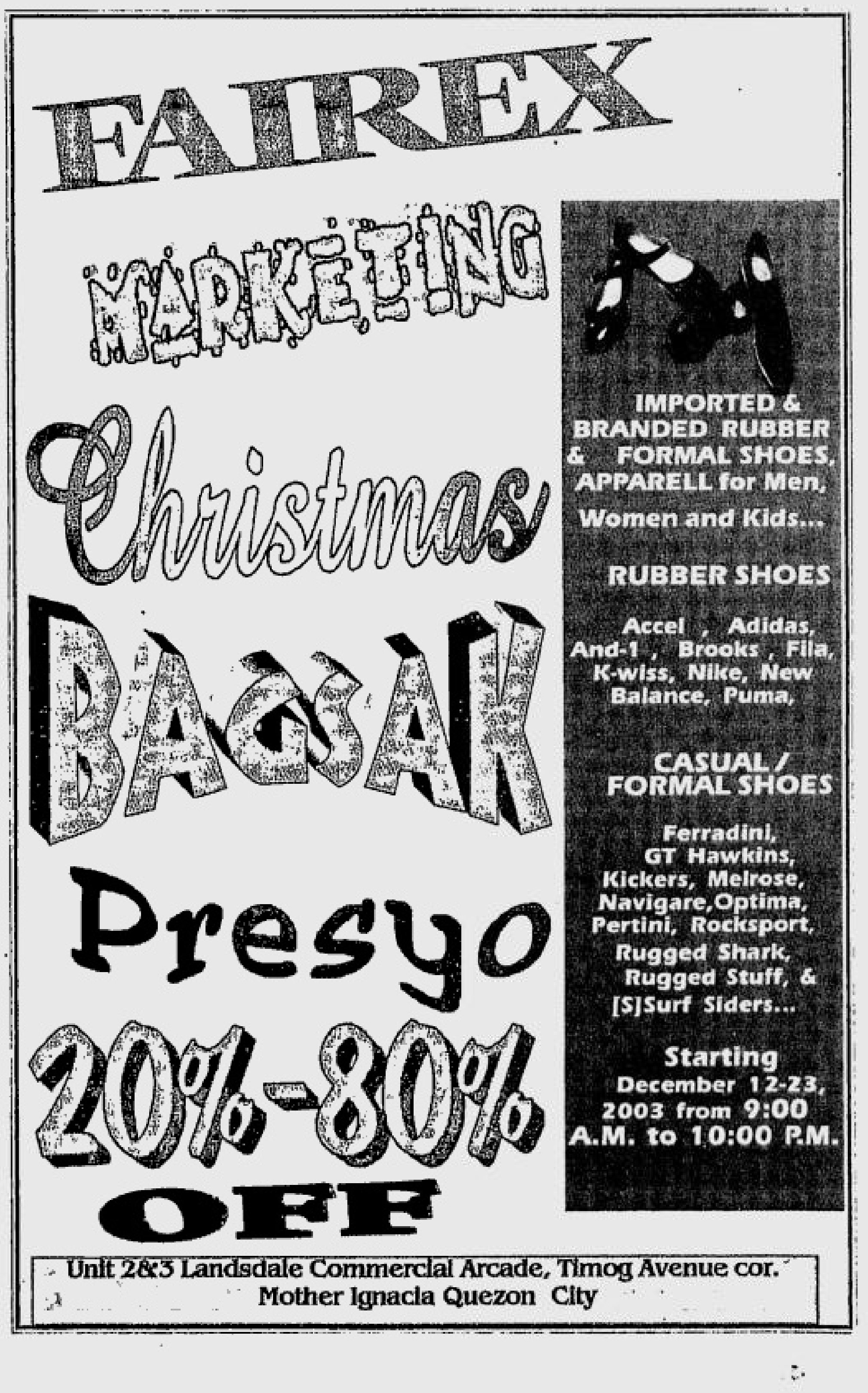

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FILIPINO gymnast Ma. Angelica Basco performs with a hoop during the 22nd Southeast Asian Games gymnastics competitions in Hanoi yesterday. AFP

Torre, 3 others ahead

By Roy Luarca

HO CHI MINH CITY—Grandmaster Eugene Torre drew his fifth round match Wednesday night but stayed at the vanguard of the strong Filipino bid in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games men's chess at the Van Don Hall here.

Torre halved the point with co-leader Indon IM Susanto Megaranto as both tallied 4 points, the same total of Indon GM Utut Adianto, who won over Vietnam's Bui Vinh.

GM Bong Villamayor, GM Joey Antonio, GM-candidate Mark Paragua and IM Ronald Dableo were at 3 points after posting varied results.

Villamayor bowed to Malaysian Rahman Mas Hafizulhimi; Antonio drew with Myanmar's Naing Myo; while Paragua and Dableo beat their Malaysian opponents.

The 19-year-old Paragua, the men's rapid individual titlist, trounced Jimmy Liew Chee Meng, duplicating the victory of Asian Zonal champion Dableo over Meng Mok Tze.

"Our chances are still good because our boys will be meeting lower-ranked opponents in Round 6," said lawyer Sammy Estimo, secretary general of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines.

The Filipinos are tied with the Indons for the lead in the standard team event, followed by the Vietnamese.

In the distaff side, WIM Beverly Mendoza lost to Vietnamese top seed Trang Hoang Thanh and stayed with 3.5 points, a full point off Trang and another Vietnamese, Nguyen Thi Thanh An.

WIM Christine Rose Mariano and WIM Sherrie Joy Lomibao expectedly drew their match and were at 3 and 2.5 points, respectively. Kathryn Ann Cruz bested Singapore's Ailin Lin to climb to 3 points.

Jins grab 3 more golds

By Roy Luarca

HO CHI MINH—Dax Alberto Morfe came back from the brink of defeat to beat Vietnam's Phan Than Dat and match the golds of compatriots David Donald Geisler and Margarita Maria Estela Bonifacio Thursday night in the 22nd Southeast Asian Games here.

Trailing, 3-5, with 2 minutes and 38 seconds to go in the third round, Morfe went on the attack and forced Dat to backtrack in their men's middleweight final at the Phu Tho Competition Hall.

Dat was assessed two points for stepping out of the mat, allowing Morfe to steal the victory that compensated for welterweight Alexander Briones' 5-4 loss to 3-time SEAG champion Kriangkai Noikeed earlier.

The in-form Geisler whipped Indon Rizal Samsir, 22-11, in the lightweight final to produce a perfect followup to his 12-9 conquest of defending champion Thit Lwin of Myanmar in the seminfinals.

Bonifacio mastered Malaysian Che Chew Chian, 5-3, for the women's middleweight crown.

The three golds raised the Filipino jins' output to four, counting lightweight Veronica Domingo's late gold Wednesday night.

Bucking a foot injury, Briones led, 4-0, only to yield three points before the 2nd round ended.

Welter Sally Solis settled for the bronze medal after losing to Indon Sinta Berliana Hero by superiority. Both wound up tied at 3-3. Heavyweight Ann Margaret also earned a bronze after being beaten by Vietnam's Tran Thi Ngoc Bich, 3-1.

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Buhain appeals swimming relay disqualification

HANOI—The disqualification of the swimmers in the men's 4x200-meter freestyle relay is not a dead-in-the-water issue.

Saying a computer error was to blame, Philippine Sports Commission chairman Eric Buhain yesterday appealed to the president of the 22nd Southeast Asian Games Federation to reconsider an earlier decision by officials denying the RP relay team of a victory for an alleged violation and awarding the gold medal to Malaysia.

BUHAIN: No basis

Buhain made the appeal during a courtesy call on SEAG president Nguyen Danh Thai yesterday morning. An earlier appeal for reconsideration has been filed by RP chef de mission Julian Camacho to the organizing committee.

The disqualification, ordered by Woon Sui Kut, Fina technical representative, was based on a computer finding of an early start-infraction in the second leg of the swim held last Saturday.

But Buhain said a copy of the computer printout of the progress of the race showed no such violation occurred during the exchange of swimmers because the negative 0.89-second infraction happened on the 300-m mark or halfway through the 200-m leg of Juan Miguel Mendoza, the second swimmer.

Buhain said the electronic timing device engineer in charge of the online monitoring and control equipment, Urs Siegenthaler, was also surprised when he saw the negative 0.89 second appear at the 300-m junction and promised to check the computer for technical flaws.

In a relay, the next swimmer must wait for the first man to touch the pad before jumping in. This is called the exchange which, in the 4x200 relay, happens after the first 200, second 200 and third 200.

No protest was filed within the stipulated 30 minutes because Buhain said the Filipinos took Woon's word that there was an RP infraction. They found out the truth only when officials asked for a computer printout of the race to check the time of the swimmers for each leg.

"I'm confident the organizers will uphold our appeal because an equipment error caused the disqualification," said Buhain.

The other members of the relay team were Miguel Molina, Mark Kalaw and Carlo Piccio.

Ernesto Gonzales

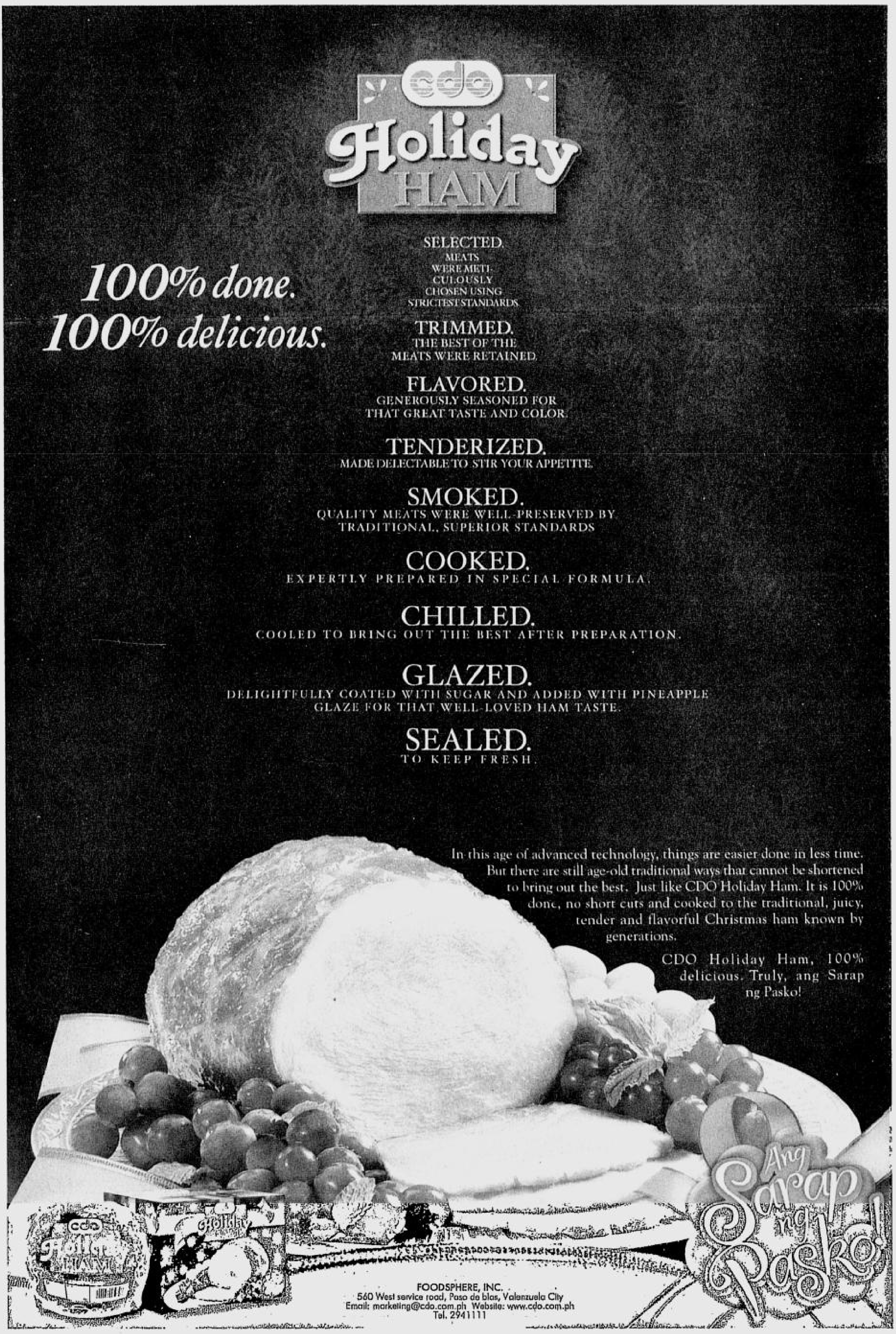
Tourism Cup tees off today

THE PHILIPPINE Tourism Cup (PTC) wraps up its series of year-round tournaments with the staging the National Finals at Club Intramuros today. Registration starts at 6 a.m.

Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon, Philippine Tourism Authority general manager Dean Barbers, Philippine Daily Inquirer president Sandy Prieto-Romualdez and PRC executive director and TSRO assistant secretary Salvador D. Sarabia will hit the ceremonial drives. Also expected on the first tee are Ruperto Nicdao of MBC, Felix Cruz of PAL and Conrad Perrerras of CSPC.

Winners of this year's PTC qualifying and regional legs will vie for the team and individual championships for men and ladies using the Stableford scoring system.

Entertainers and well-known personalities will grace the awards ceremonies to be held at the ABC Room of Club Intramuros.



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Tigers go for the kill tonigh

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Game 5—Coca-Cola d. SMB, 86-84

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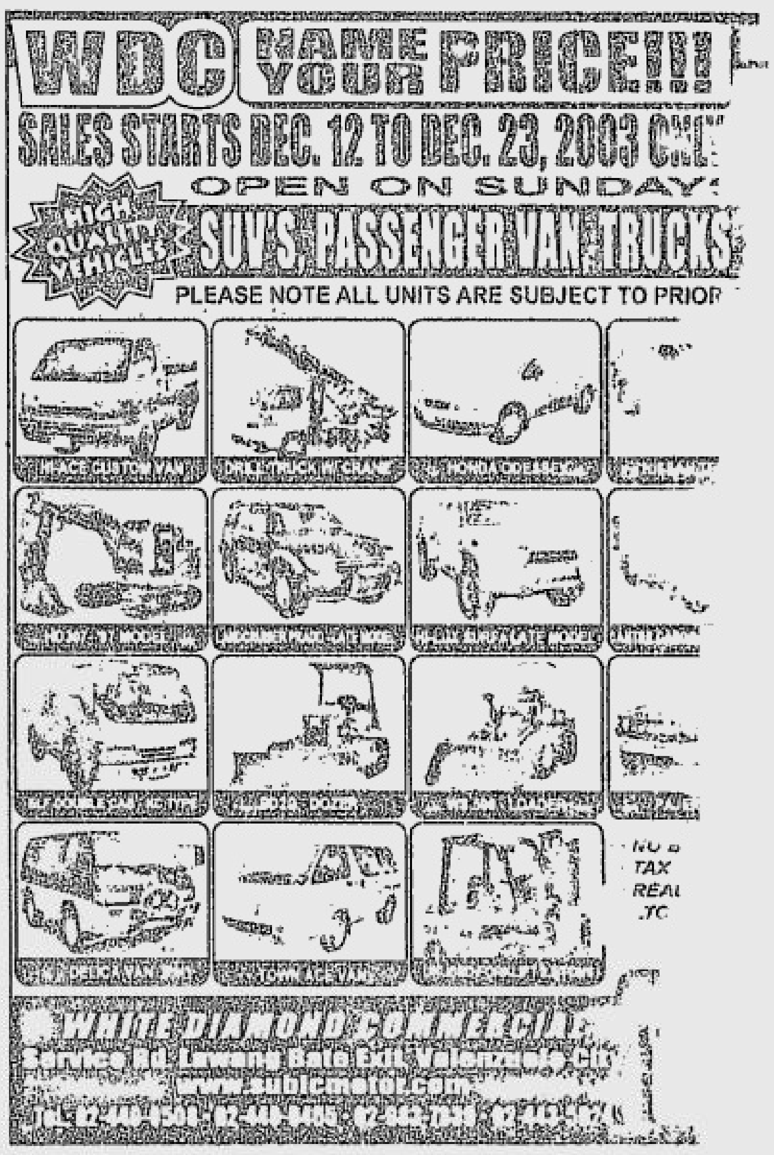

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SPORTSWATCH

2 Bongs top Founders' Cup

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Naga sports council affair

GIFT-GIVING to the poor, the awarding of prizes for top athletes as well sports and cultural activities will mark the Naga City Sports Council's 21st founding anniversary celebration on Dec. 22-24. Council overall chair Pedro Lee said the gift-giving to about 1,000 indigents in the city will usher in the three-day affair. The project is held in cooperation with the Naga City Social Welfare and Development Office and the council's supporters and corporate sponsors, including Torres Brandy, San Miguel Corp., Coca-Cola, Century Tuna, Zest-O, Milo, Unilab, Unilever, Alaska Milk, Tang-Eden, Ho-Mi Noodles, Fundador Brandy, and JDH-IDS Logistics and Bombo Radyo Philippines dzNG Naga through Orville Cepeda. The council, in coordination with city schools division Director Nenita L. Ramos and PE supervisor Teddy Palacio, will also honor the top 10 school athletes of the city. The council is also holding the 1st Bicol Region Cheering Competition and Gymnastics Exhibition on Dec. 22 at the Peñafrancia Landing Arch Area in the city.

Garcia-Gonzales rules tilt

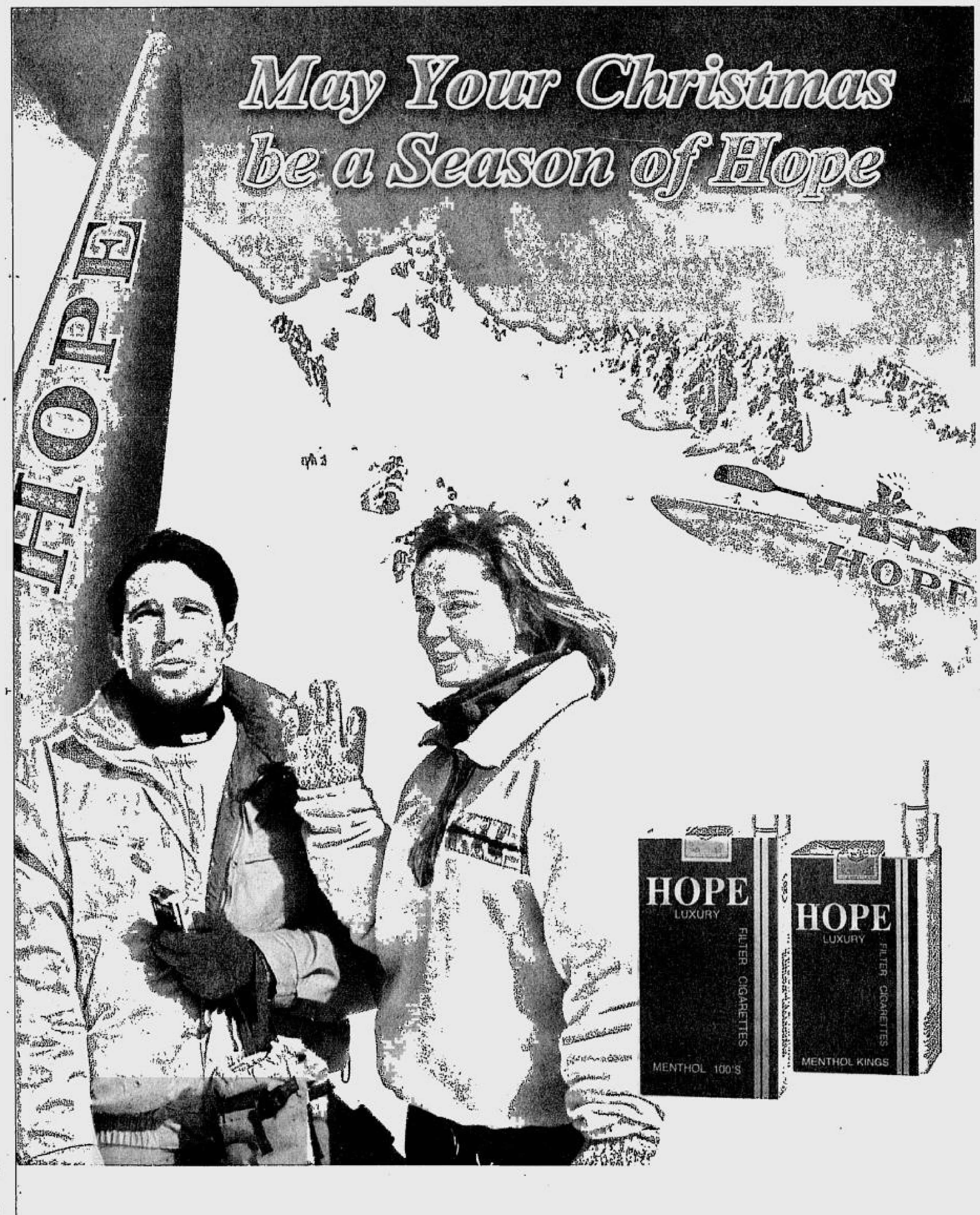
BOBBY Garcia and David Gonzales ruled the recent Caliraya Springs Golf and Country Club Bassfishing Tournament with 13.861 kg from 19 largemouth bass, including Gonzales' 1.318 kg, largest of 80 bass hooked in the two-day Philippine Game Fishing Foundation event. Edmund Lim and Tony Ng Jr. caught 17 bass at 8.999 kg and edged as first runner-up by only 194 grams the 20-bass tally of Catch Santos and Bong Nery of Team Shimano. Caliraya Springs president Robert Chan backed this final leg of the Angler of the Year circuit.

Las Piñas 5-cocker up

THE NEW Las Piñas Cockpit, now fully air-conditioned, presents the Yearend Blockbuster 5-Cock Derby tomorrow, with big-time cockers seeing action. To be hosted by popular sportsman Gerry Ramos of Las Piñas, this one-day event will be participated in by prominent cockers and breeders, including Gov. Ito Yñares, Patrick Antonio, Sonny Lagon, Gov. Tony Kho of Masbate, newspaper publisher Butch Macasaet, Mayor Nene Aguilar, former ambassador Danding Cojuangco, Ucap president Raymond Velayo, Jet and Joel Fernando of Pampanga, Madlambayan Brothers, Jingco Brothers, Louie Cua and Boy de Roca. Submission of weights is set today from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. For inquiries, call 873-1040. Meanwhile, LPC manager Alex Tobias said hackfights at the cockpit are now scheduled from Sunday to Saturday.

Pasay 'Pasko' derby today

THE CHAMPIONSHIP round of the "Pasko Na Sa Pasay" 4-Cock Derby gets going at 1 p.m. today at the Pasay City Cockpit with more than 100 fights scheduled. Sponsors are Sagupaan Hammer, Sagupan Mite and Sagupaan B-50 Forten. Pit manager and derby host Eric dela Rosa said a P600,000 prize will go to the champions and P250,000 to the runners-up. The champion handler and gaffer get P100,000 and P50,000, respectively. For inquiries, call 843-1890 or 843-1746. Meanwhile, the NPC 3-Cock Derby will be held Monday at the Santa Ana Cockpit, said Dela Rosa who also manages the cockpit. Entry fee is P5,500. For inquiries, call 898-3474 or 898-3475.



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BONG de Luna carded a 70 and Bong Zamora returned a 67 last Friday to emerge as low gross and low-net champions, respectively, in the second Founders' Cup tournament at the Valley Golf and Country Club in Antipolo City. Wilfredo Nieves scored a net 67 to beat Cale Canel (68) and E. Manzanarez (69) for the Class A title in the tourney hosted by the Lambda Rho Beta Fraternity of San Beda College of Law and sponsored by Globe Telecoms, San Miguel Corp., among others. Mar Deza posted a 71 to rule Class B over J. De Chavez (72), beat S. Chuyaco to third place with more pars (7-3). Lawyer J. Barameda scored a 75, the same card of F. Cruz, but won Class C with more pars. Third was Don Quinto.

Naga sports council affair

GIFT-GIVING to the poor, the awarding of prizes for top athletes as well sports and cultural activities will mark the Naga City Sports Council's 21st founding anniversary celebration on Dec. 22-24. Council overall chair Pedro Lee said the gift-giving to about 1,000 indigents in the city will usher in the three-day affair. The project is held in cooperation with the Naga City Social Welfare and Development Office and the council's supporters and corporate sponsors, including Torres Brandy, San Miguel Corp., Coca-Cola, Century Tuna, Zest-O, Milo, Unilab, Unilever, Alaska Milk, Tang-Eden, Ho-Mi Noodles, Fundador Brandy, and JDH-IDS Logistics and Bombo Radyo Philippines dzNG Naga through Orville Cepeda. The council, in coordination with city schools division Director Nenita L. Ramos and PE supervisor Teddy Palacio, will also honor the top 10 school athletes of the city. The council is also holding the 1st Bicol Region Cheering Competition and Gymnastics Exhibition on Dec. 22 at the Peñafrancia Landing Arch Area in the city.

Garcia-Gonzales rules tilt

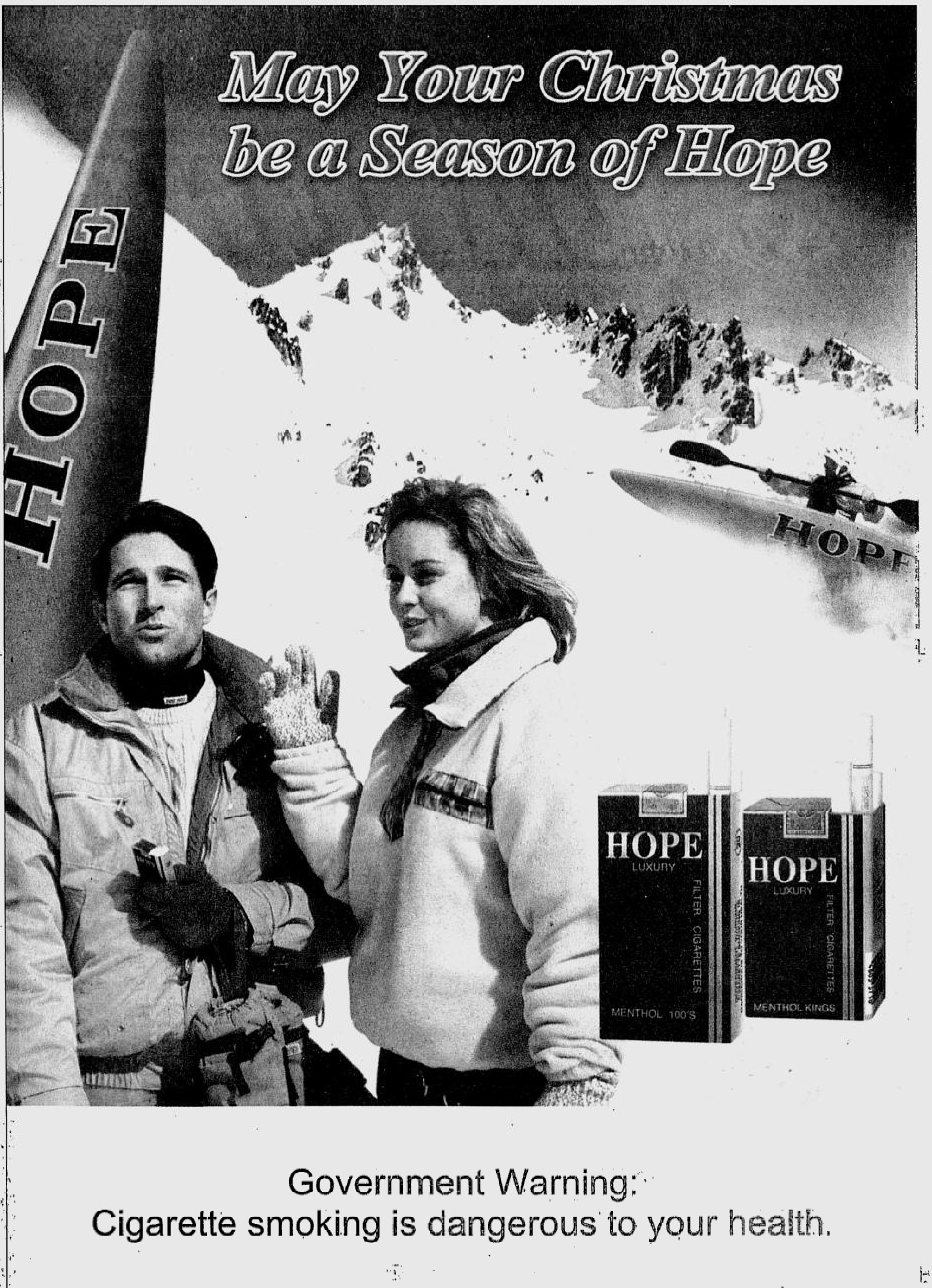
BOBBY Garcia and David Gonzales ruled the recent Caliraya Springs Golf and Country Club Bassfishing Tournament with 13.861 kg from 19 largemouth bass, including Gonzales' 1.318 kg, largest of 80 bass hooked in the two-day Philippine Game Fishing Foundation event. Edmund Lim and Tony Ng Jr. caught 17 bass at 8.999 kg and edged as first runner-up by only 194 grams the 20-bass tally of Catch Santos and Bong Nery of Team Shimano. Caliraya Springs president Robert Chan backed this final leg of the Angler of the Year circuit.

Las Piñas 5-cocker up

THE NEW Las Piñas Cockpit, now fully air-conditioned, presents the Yearend Blockbuster 5-Cock Derby tomorrow, with big-time cockers seeing action. To be hosted by popular sportsman Gerry Ramos of Las Piñas, this one-day event will be participated in by prominent cockers and breeders, including Gov. Ito Yñares, Patrick Antonio, Sonny Lagon, Gov. Tony Kho of Masbate, newspaper publisher Butch Macasaet, Mayor Nene Aguilar, former ambassador Danding Cojuangco, Ucap president Raymond Velayo, Jet and Joel Fernando of Pampanga, Madlambayan Brothers, Jingco Brothers, Louie Cua and Boy de Roca. Submission of weights is set today from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m. For inquiries, call 873-1040. Meanwhile, LPC manager Alex Tobias said hackfights at the cockpit are now scheduled from Sunday to Saturday.

Pasay 'Pasko' derby today

THE CHAMPIONSHIP round of the "Pasko Na Sa Pasay" 4-Cock Derby gets going at 1 p.m. today at the Pasay City Cockpit with more than 100 fights scheduled. Sponsors are Sagupaan Hammer, Sagupan Mite and Sagupaan B-50 Forten. Pit manager and derby host Eric dela Rosa said a P600,000 prize will go to the champions and P250,000 to the runners-up. The champion handler and gaffer get P100,000 and P50,000, respectively. For inquiries, call 843-1890 or 843-1746. Meanwhile, the NPC 3-Cock Derby will be held Monday at the Santa Ana Cockpit, said Dela Rosa who also manages the cockpit. Entry fee is P5,500. For inquiries, call 898-3474 or 898-3475.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RP cagers a win away from crown

From page A25

Filipinos squandered a 20-point spread and were pressured to the end before pulling through with their fourth win iin as many starts.

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With the count at 66-46, coach Aric del Rosario rested Celino Cruz, who played almost without relief as backcourt partner Dennis Madrid was recuperating from a groin injury he sustained during Tuesday's practice.

The Indons, banking on wily, talented guard Mario Wuysang, pounced on the situation to unload 10 straight points as the rattled Filipinos lapsed into passing errors.

Wuysang, only 5-foot-9, made all but one of his team's last 11 points, including three triples, enabling the Indons, being mentored by Filipino Bong Ramos, to threaten at 70-74.

The Filipinos ran out the clock after Recardeo Calimag had pegged the final tally by sinking the back end of his two charities. The defeat was the Indons' third in four games.

Unlike in their earlier victories, the Filipinos started sluggishly and trailed, 34-42, in the third quarter.

Hotshot James Yap found his range, however, sparking and capping a 10-point cluster with triples as the Filipinos led at 49-42.

With Gary David, Ranidel de Ocampo and Rich Alvarez providing more firepower, the Filipinos finally broke away at 66-46 only to allow Wuysang to shine.

Earlier, the Filipinas bested the Indons, 55-47, for their third victory against a loss. Emelia Vega, silenced in the last two games, struck anew with 14 points for the Filipinas. Estrellita Enriquez added 13, and Cherrlyn Lubiano contributed 12 for Bai Cristobal's charges.

Scores:

Men

PHILIPPINES 75—Yap 22, David 20, De Ocampo 12, Alvarez 6, Pingris 6, Sotto 4, Cruz 3, Calimag 2, Salangsang 0, Gonzales 0.

INDONESIA 70—Wuysang 29, Sumargo 13, Enratino 12, Day 6, Sudladnyana 3, Sudarsono 2, Chandra 1, Rinaldo 0, Jonson 0, Hartono 0.

Quarters: 11-22, 34-37, 60-46, 75-70.

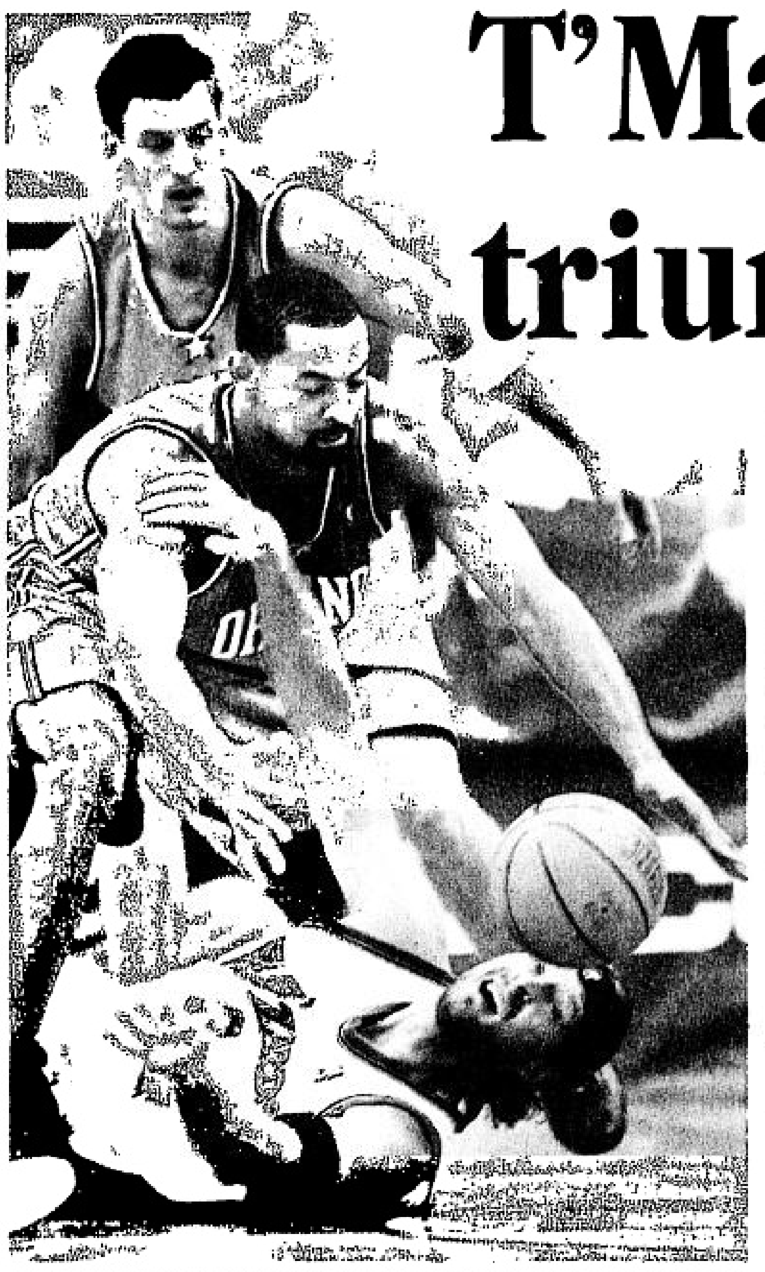
Women

PHILIPPINES 55—Vega 14, Enriquez 13, Lubiano 12, Valencia 6, Grazales 5, Bambico 5, Esteban 0, Faustino 0, Narciza 0.

INDONESIA 47—Mas 11, Humardani 10, Albertina 7, Ayuningrum 7, Herawati 4, Indah 4, Siswari 3, Yuniastuti 0, Hoe 0.

Quarters: 19-8, 28-20, 42-35, 55-47.

T'Mac, Magic triumph again



WASHINGTON'S Christian Laettner (bottom) battles for ball control against Orlando Magic's Juwan Howard and Gordan Giricek. AP

WASHINGTON—Tracy McGrady scored 27 points as the Orlando Magic grabbed their second-straight victory with a 95-91 win over the Washington Wizards on Wednesday.

The Magic opened the season with a win at New York but followed that with 19 consecutive losses —a run which came to an end with Monday's win in Florida over Phoenix.

On Wednesday, Shammond Williams, who scored a season-high 17 points, made three three-pointers and two free throws in the final seconds to snap Orlando's eight-game losing streak on the road.

The Wizards (7-14) did have two possessions to tie the game in the final minute, but Larry Hughes and Kwame Brown both missed jumpers as the Wizards lost their second straight.

Hughes had 19 points to lead Washington, while Brown chipped in with 18 points.

Injured Gilbert Arenas missed his eight straight game for Washington, but did not help his team by being charged with two technical fouls and ejected from his seat on the bench late in the fourth quarter.

Orlando (3-19) also got 15 points and nine rebounds from Juwan Howard and 15 points and six rebounds from Gordan Giricek.

In Boston, Paul Pierce scored 36 points and had 13 rebounds to lead the Celtics to their third straight win in a high-scoring game against Seattle, 126-112.

Meanwhile, Frank Johnson was fired as coach of the Phoenix Suns, a young team with high expectations that is off to an 8-13 start and has lost six of its last seven games.

The Suns promoted lead assistant Mike D'Antoni, a star player and highly successful coach in Italy who coached the Denver Nuggets in the lockout-shortened 1998-99 season.

Complete results:

Boston 126, Seattle 112; Orlando 95, Washington 91; Memphis 103, Atlanta 90; Milwaukee 94, Golden State 89 (OT); San Antonio 102, Portland 77; Utah 95, New York 73; LA Clippers 100, Dallas 99. *Reuters*

Matsui to Mets for $20M

NEW YORK—Kazuo Matsui, already a star in New York, didn't have to go to Nobu. The food from the world famous sushi chef was brought to him.

Matsui was the toast of the town Wednesday after finalizing his $20.1 million, three-year contract with the New York Mets. He proclaimed in English: "Hello everybody. My name is Kazuo Matsui. I love New York." *AP*

Chinese master heads 'Mano-Mano' judges

A REVERED Tai Chi master from China will head the panel of judges of the inaugural Mano-Mano challenge, ensuring a smooth and quality fights in this mixed martial arts competition that gives emphasis on striking skills.

Master Lou Mei Cheng is among the three judges that will render decision when the event unfolds on Dec. 27 at the Philsports in Pasig City.

Joining Cheng are Melito Geronimo, the legendary mayor from Baras, Rizal, who founded *sikaran* (Filipino version of kickboxing), and Roberto Gonzales, the former action star who was responsible for bringing the Okinawan style of karate to the Philippines.

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AGUILAR (middle) celebrates with teammates Beech and Dela Cruz.

Aguilar bags record 7th Rider of the Year award

ASIAN champion Glenn Aguilar stood at the vanguard as Revtex riders stamped their dominance in the 2nd round of the National Motocross Championship with six masterful wins at the Sta. Monica racetrack recently in Puerto Princesa, Palawan.

Crowned Asia-Pacific champion in Guam recently, Aguilar swept four major divisions, including the Pro/Expert 125CC and the centerpiece Pro/Expert Open 250cc, to likewise capture the 2003 National Rider of the Year Award handed out by the sanctioning National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association.

The Revtex team captain, who had 80 points in the series organized by MP Turbo Sports, also clinched a record seventh Rider of the Year plum.

"This has truly been a great year for me and the Revtex organization as well," said Aguilar, who is sponsored by Oakley, Sidi Boots, Renthal, HJC Helmets, Pro Grip and No Fear.

Aguilar won the crown by beating his teammates Bebet dela Cruz and Jerry Beech in the Palawan motocross.

Rookie rider Eric Mitra collected two first place finishes in the Novice and Inter-Open Divisions.

GOLD CUP

Free Wind seeks back-to-back win

CAN Free Wind do a repeat?

That will be answered when the 31st Presidential Gold Cup unfolds at the San Lazaro Leisure Park in Carmona, Cavite, on Sunday.

Free Wind will have star jockey Jeffril Zarate as partner when he aims for a back-to-back win in the prestigious event.

Considered as the high point of the yearly racing calendar, the PGC stakes a record pot of P2.875 million this year, with the winner getting a record P2 million.

PCSO chair Ma. Livia "Honeygirl" de Leon announced that no less than President Macapagal-Arroyo, the event's honoree, has been invited to the occasion to award the prestigious Cup to the owner of the winning entry.

"The annual running of the Presidential Gold Cup in honor of the President is a reaffirmation of the PCSO's commitment to elevate the standard of local horse racing and provide the incentive for the improvement of the local breed," De Leon said.

The original P1.5-million top prize allotted by the PCSO will be augmented by a P500,000 donation from industrialist-horseman Don Antonio Floirendo Sr.

Expected to provide the biggest challenge to Free Wind in the 2,000-meter contest is Material Maker, a progeny of 1995 PGC champion Strong Material out of former campaigner Rhummaker.

Also joining the fray are last year's runner-up Lyonnais, West Bound, 2001 Triple Crown champion Silver Story, multiple stakes-winning 3-year-old Success Story and High Octane, as well as seasoned gallopers Perfect Storm, Diktador, Mica's Magic and Red Star Rising.

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Race 1—1. Will to Fight 2. Free Again 3. Native Talent/Perfect Gift 4. Aspire 5. Sand Splash

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Race 3—1. St. Emilion 2. Bullish View 3. Top Dancer 4. Sir Olizon 5. Bring Home D' Bacon 6. Dynamite Jack

Race 4—1. Kathy Rose/Come in Glory 2. Hingis 3. Silent Heat 4. Socialize

Race 5—1. Lucky Strike 2. Aim for Gold 3. Morning Glory 4. Princess Dancer 5. Earth Angel

Race 6—1. Dancing Kiara 2. Witch Craft 3. Mini Skirt 4. Early Warning

Race 7—1. Husay Na 2. Native Prince 3. Virgin Atlantic 4. Tower of Power 5. Boogie Shoes

Race 8—1. D' Minnows 2. Risen Free 3. Society Girl 4. La Española 5. Baby My Beloved

Race 9—1. Kusang Loob 2. Princess Malinda 3. Friendly Lover 4. Sir Lawrence 5. Vinfa's Pride 6. Gold Marlin

Niu, Lee arrange semifinal tussle

TOP seed Charlie Niu clobbered Lito Nicolas, 6-1, 6-0, to arrange a semifinal showdown with Peterson Lee in the premier division of the first Senior Executives Tennis Championships at the Quezon City Sports Club indoor shell courts on E. Rodriguez Avenue in Quezon City over the weekend.

Lee tamed brother Jefferson, 6-4, 6-3, to advance against Niu, who is carrying the colors of the Philippine Columbian Association.

Gerry Sadang of Fort Bonifacio downed Ricky Agana, 6-2,7-5, to clinch the other semis berth in the event organized by the Philippine Tennis Management Inc.

Niu later teamed up with Michael Sy to beat the tandem of Chito Estanislao and Arnel Tiquia of Rizal Sports Club, 6-1, 6-1, and lead the winners in the doubles division. The Lee brothers, son of Peter Lee of Hongkong Tea House, likewise advanced to the next round with a 6-4, 6-4 victory over Expedito Lim and Cesar Tan.

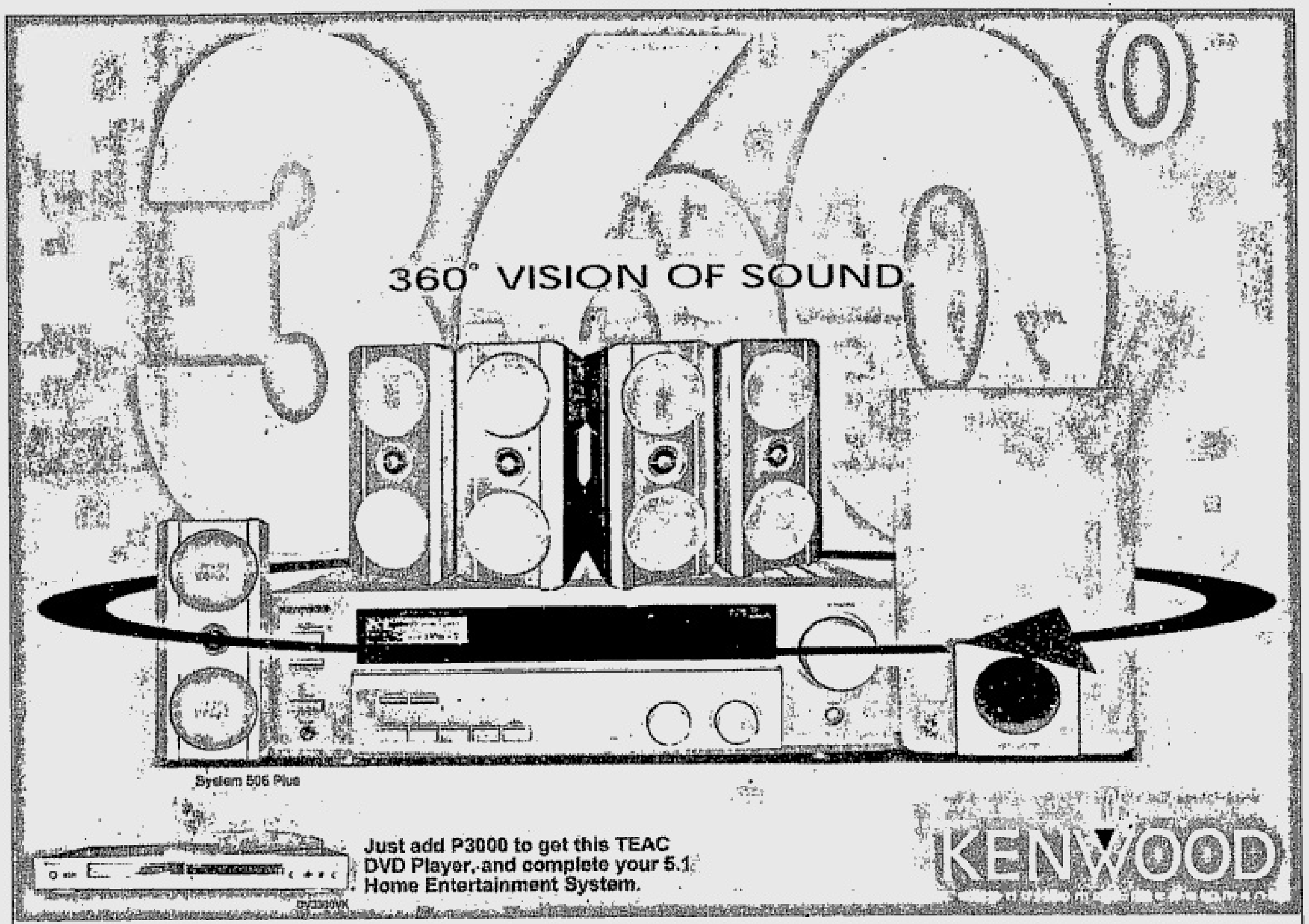
Badminton clinic today at UST gym

THE LA Gear Badminton Clinic to be conducted by former world champion Lai Cai Qin of China will be held this afterhoon at the UST Gym in España, Manila.

The Chinese badminton legend arrived here yesterday from Singapore.

"Since badminton is getting popular all over the country, we though of inviting international-caliber players to teach our youngsters the finer aspects of the game. So with the assistance of UST's IPEA headed by Fr. Ermito de Sagon, we invited Lai Cai Qin to conduct a clinic," said Thomas Lim and Johnny Thai of PhilGear Int'l Inc., the firm behind LA Gear footwear, apparel bags and accessories.

Assisting her in the clinic co-sponsored by Burlington, Dunlop, Sportshouse and Sunkist are the UST men's and women's badminton teams. Raffle prizes await those who will attend the clinic.



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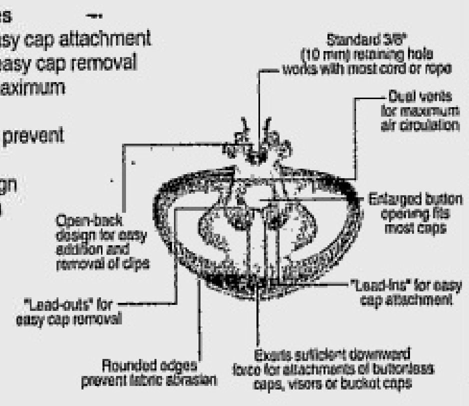
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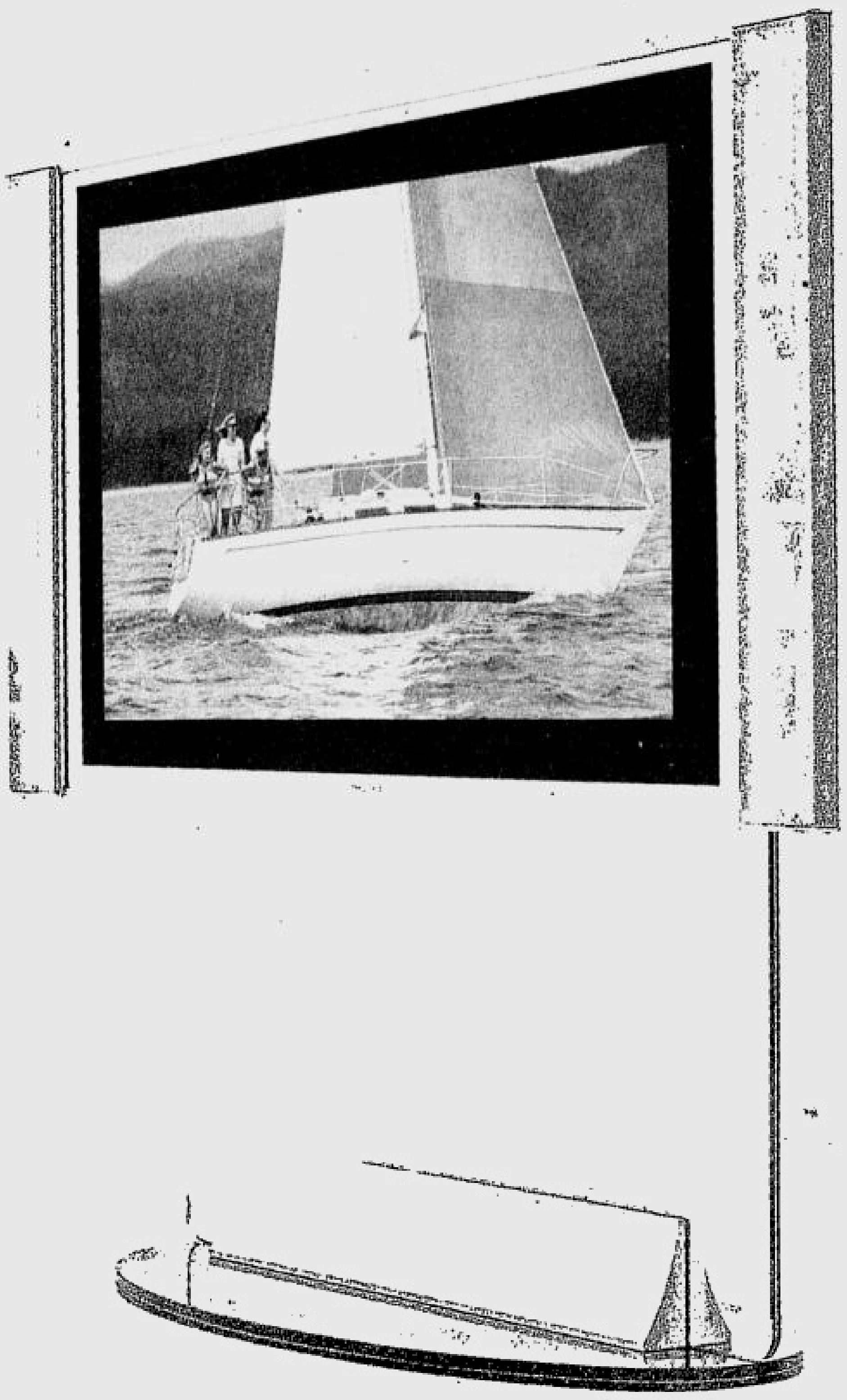

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Economic resilience seen despite crisis

By Clarissa S. Batino

FORMER finance secretary Jose Isidro Camacho yesterday said he saw the economy staying resilient in the near term despite the fiscal crisis it was in and the focus of politicians on campaigning for next May's election.

Camacho, who the other day warned that the economy was in crisis and that the political system was unable to cope, told a business luncheon the country's huge debt—which hit nearly $58 billion as of September—was "creating a sense of concern".

"We will not go under," he said. "We are in a fiscal crisis because we've got this large deficit which compressed our expenditures." Camacho resigned last month, citing exhaustion with the job.

His departure sparked a fall in the peso to a record low of 55.85 to the dollar as markets worried the respected official's absence would hurt government efforts to limit its deficit and overall debt.

Camacho resigned last month, citing exhaustion with the job and sparking a fall in the peso to a record low against the dollar as markets worried that the respected minister's departure would hurt government efforts to limit its huge debt.

As of July, the government had already exceeded its debt stock target of P3.058 trillion ($54 billion). The national government's debts account for about 60 percent of total public debts.

The Philippines, the largest sovereign debt issuer in Asia outside of Japan, taps both local and overseas markets to fund a budget deficit, which it aims to keep at P202 billion this year.

Last year, the country shocked investors by blowing through three deficit targets, ending the year with a shortfall of P210.7 billion. The country has run deficits in nine of the past 13 years due to anemic tax collections, evasion, corruption, and rising debt servicing costs.

In the first 10 months of the year, the country's fiscal shortfall was P163.88 billion against the target of P171.88 billion. Officials said preliminary numbers showed the government's budget deficit remained under control in November.

Camacho said the government should boost tax collection to improve the fiscal balance, while Congress should pass reforms such as increasing industry taxes that are among the lowest in the region.

Camacho's departure sparked a fall in the peso to a record low of 55.85 to the dollar as markets worried the respected minister's absence would hurt government efforts to limit its deficit and overall debt.

The peso fell to 55.44 to a dollar yesterday, down 7 centavos from the previous day's close of 55.37 in reaction to statements made by former Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho that the government was in a fiscal crisis.

The stock market was also flat

ECONOMIC/B2

Open skies policy attracts US carrier to Clark

By Abigail L. Ho

JUST a week after President Macapagal-Arroyo signed an executive order implementing open skies for cargo at the Subic Freeport and the Clark Special Economic Zone, an American cargo carrier has already reserved a 50-hectare property in Clark to house its hub.

Clark International Airport Corp. (CIAC) president and chief executive Adelberto Yap said in a telephone interview yesterday that the US cargo carrier, which he declined to name, would conduct a survey of the property next month.

"A big air cargo carrier from the US will be relocating here soon. They have reserved a 50-hectare property here so they can build their hub by next year," he said.

Yap also disclosed that he had a recent meeting with Philippine Airlines Inc. chair Lucio Tan and other PAL officials to lay down the groundwork for the airline's expansion in Clark.

He said the Chinese tycoon would be getting a 100-hectare property in Clark to house the cargo facility of PAL as well as the infrastructure requirements of Lufthansa Technik Philippines, a joint venture between Tan-owned MacroAsia Corp. and Germany's Lufthansa Technik AG.

Other foreign cargo as well as passenger carriers have also expressed interest in either operating in Clark for the first time or expanding their current operations there, he said.

These included Nippon Cargo Airlines, Gulf Air, Qatar Airways and Asiana Airlines.

Right now, Asiana flies three times weekly out of Clark to Seoul in South Korea. By next month, the South Korean flag carrier would add a fourth flight.

DIOSDADO Macapagal Airport is expected to benefit fromthe open-skies policy

Cargo carriers with existing operations in Clark included United Parcel Service, which has its hub in Clark, Pacific East Asia Cargo (PEAC) and Transmile Air.

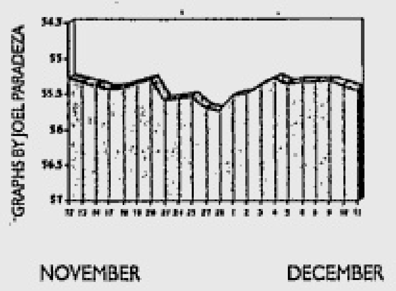
UPS mounts nine flights daily out of its regional hub, PEAC flies six times daily and Transmile twice daily.

Yap said the implementation of open skies for cargo in Clark would accelerate the development of the Diosdado Macapagal International Airport as an alternative gateway to the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Manila.

OPEN/B2

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



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As of 5 p.m., Dec. 11, 2003

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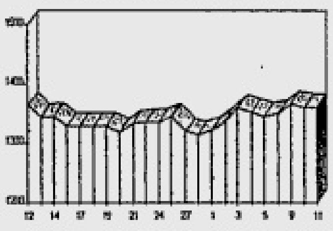
STOCK MARKET

Stocks end flat on Camacho comments

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



(See stock market report on Page B8)

STOCKS ended flat yesterday, despite bargain hunting in some blue-chip companies, as sentiment was dented by former Finance Secretary Jose Camacho's comments that the economy was in fiscal crisis.

The peso also weakened in reaction to Camacho, who resigned last month citing exhaustion with the job.

Camacho said at a forum on Wednesday the country's debt levels were unsustainably high and the current political system was unable to deal effectively with the problem.

The main stock index eased 0.48 of a point or 0.04 percent to end at 1,359.60 points after moving in a tight range of about six points. It is up 33.5 percent this year.

The peso slipped to a low of 55.435 to the dollar in morning trade.

"The market showed some resilience despite the comments of Camacho, which should have been a dampener," said Jose Vistan, analyst at AB Capital Securities Inc.

"It's not going to fall on deaf ears. You will see some reaction to that from different financial institutions and rating agencies, especially since it's coming from him."

Camacho, widely respected for reining in the budget deficit this year, said government borrowing costs were creeping higher because of a general loss of confidence in the economy.

Vistan said the market was likely to remain flat with a downward bias as investors slowed stock accumulation toward the Christmas holidays.

Turnover ballooned to P1.07 billion from Wednesday's P447.4 million, boosted by a block sale of Ayala Corp. shares worth P480 million.

Ayala, the country's largest conglomerate with interests in telecommunications, property and banking, closed flat at P4.90.

STOCKS/B4

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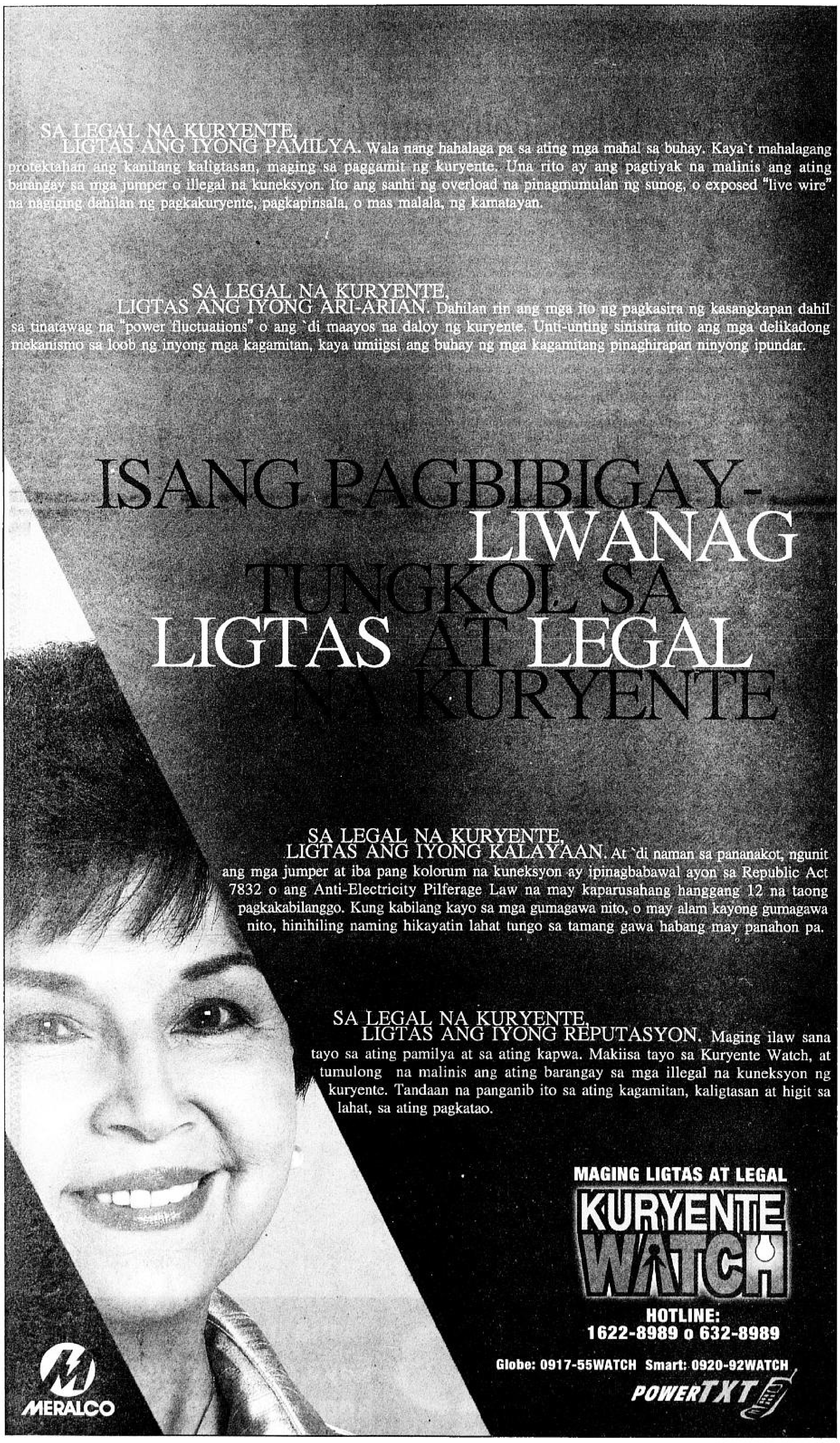

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MERALCO

Gov't seen raising $1.5B in ODA in 2004

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE DEPARTMENT of Finance is looking to raise between $1 billion and $1.5 billion in official development assistance (ODA) next year to beef up the government's foreign funding despite a sluggish inflow this year from foreign multilateral creditors.

"We could raise (that amount) from project and program loans in 2004 considering that a number of those we were expecting to come in this year failed to materialize," said Finance Officer-in-Charge Juanita Amatong.

Modestly, however, the government is factoring in only about $500 million in ODA funds in the 2004 financing program.

Amatong pointed out that the government would rely more on the $1.8 billion that would come from commercial sources. Of the amount, the government had already raised $1.05 billion and the remaining $750 million will be completed by January.

Sufficient inflow from foreign funds would allow the government to settle maturing obligations, finance a programmed budget deficit of P197.8 billion in 2004, and boost the country's external reserves while the funds are unused and deposited with the central bank.

From the Asian Development Bank alone, Amatong said the government was expecting at least $250 million in program and project loans.

She said the ADB would release $75 million next year, which was the second tranche of the multilateral lender's loan tied to the development of the capital markets.

The finance undersecretary said the World Bank would also release about $250 million in program loans anchored on improvements in civil service.

The problem with ODA, particularly project loans, was the inability of the government to provide counterpart funding required by multilateral creditors.

Given the government's tight annual budget, several project loans have not moved due to the absence of counterpart funds and yet the government continued to pay commitment fees on the approved ODA lines.

Since 2001, the government had been conducting an inventory of project loans that required commitment fees even while their status remained pending.

Several foreign-assisted projects have been shelved by the government to avoid paying the costly fees.

On program loans, Amatong said the problem would be on the rigid conditions set by the lenders.

In the past, the banking sector loan of the World Bank was cancelled after the government failed to meet some of the conditions, including the passage of some bills and the full privatization of the Philippine National Bank.

Economic . . .

From page B1

yesterday despite some bargain hunting, as Camacho's reported comments on the economy dented sentiment.

"For a former finance chief who was very credible to the market, his statements had a strong impact and made a lot of people wary and apprehensive," said a treasury official from a foreign bank.

Camacho ended almost three years of government service on Nov. 30 but almost two weeks since his resignation, he continued to exert influence on the market.

When Camacho announced his resignation on Nov. 21, the peso fell to its record low at the time of 55.585 to $1.

A few days later, a warning from Moody's Investors Service of an impending credit rating downgrade and the announcement of actor Fernando Poe Jr. of his presidential bid pushed the peso to a new intraday low of 55.85 on Nov. 27 and a record close of 55.73 a day later.

The peso opened weak at 55.40 and although it managed to climb to 55.37, a nervous market sent the peso down and made it the fourth worst-performer in Asia yesterday after days of steady trading.

The peso remained the top loser in Asia on a year-to-date basis after having shed 3.3 percent of its value since the start of 2003.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, however, remained confident that the peso would rebound and firm up to the 55:$1 level due to the dollar inflow from overseas workers coupled with soft demand for the greenback. *Reuters*

Open skies . . .

From page B1

He added that since Clark had more space for expansion than the Naia, it was but realistic to think that the main international gateway would eventually be transferred to Clark.

"We have to face the fact that the Naia will eventually be transferred here. There's no more room to grow there. It only has one runway, so you can no longer expand. Here, a third runway will be constructed, depending on the level of activity and the demand. This will be in addition to the parallel runways that we already have here," he said.

Yap said the expected increase in activity as a result of the enforcement of cargo open skies in Clark would also attract more passenger carriers to operate there.

From 1,500 passengers a month, he said this number could grow tenfold to 15,000 by March.

Rustan's mini-republics

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

NEDY Tantoco, the high-society boutique queen, has taken another step toward completely disengaging herself from the family's flagship Rustan department store management.

According to the grapevine, a recent family meeting has decided to spin off the management of Gucci, DKNY, Salvatore Ferragamo, and other name-brand merchandise even while they are still being carried within Rustan's gilded shelves.

These high-fashion items, which are already being marketed in stand-alone boutiques, will now be under the sole direction and management of Nedy Tantoco, the eldest daughter of the Rustans founding couple who has pushed for these uberbrands.

Apparently, what is new in the autonomous set-up is that it also involves keeping separate books of accounts between the merchandise and Rustan Commercial Corp., the department store chain where many of these exotic brands where first introduced to the local market.

Nedy, the second of the six Tantoco children, has elected to stay out of the management of the department store chain, which is now being run by Marilen, the fifth child, so the former could concentrate on her choice high-end brands.

In the meantime, Nedy still handles the marketing of the group's profitable cosmetics and perfume lines until the family can decide under what corporate umbrella would the two lines be eventually placed, according to the grapevine.

Nedy with her son Anton Huang have actually been running a string of fashionable shops under a separate corporate entity, Stores Specialists Inc. Despite its separate personality, SSI is listed as one of the eight companies under the Rustan Group of Companies, with the high-end SSI merchandises still being carried within Rustan's department stores.

The concept is "eight independently created and autonomous corporate organizations" is how the Rustan mission-vision statement put it in the group website.

This concept has already been actualized in Rockwell, the Lopez mall which, in reality, is Rustans Makati broken down into Rustan's high-end boutiques and the supermarket. The concept again has been successfully applied again within Ayala's newly redeveloped Greenbelt mall, where majority of the boutiques are of Rustan's provenance, including the just-opened Rustan Fresh deli-grocery.

In addition to Store Specialists, the eight Rustan republics include the Royal Duty Free shops in Subic and Clark, Rustan Marketing Specialists (the joint venture with Marks & Spencer), Starbucks Coffee, and Shopwise, the supermarket chain under Rico, the eldest and lone son, that now plans to set up a Cubao branch in Araneta Center despite, ironically, the long-time presence and dominance of the Rustan Superstore in the area.

The high profile of its top merchandise and aggressive marketing are a complete contrast to the company's decidedly low profile. Except for telephone numbers and addresses, Rustan's award-winning website does not list a single officer of the group.

Except for their Marcos ties that became a political issue in the aftermath of the Ninoy Aquino assassination, the Tantocos, the toast of society pages, have been successful in keeping their business affairs under the radar of the business press.

Even when the Tantoco children were scandalized after the widowed patriarch, Ambassador Bienvenido Tantoco Sr., shacked up with a Filipina he met in a Macau casino—Rustans at one point became a La Union employment agency due to the number of relatives the no-longer lady companion had successfully placed within the department store-supermarket chain—had been completely kept out of the society gossip columns.

Cash out time

IT looks like his Christmas bonus is not enough. Or his gift list is getting bigger.

Export and Industry Bank president Benjamin Castillo sold 40 million shares of ExportBank Monday and Tuesday, netting him about P20 million for the two-day transaction.

Heard through the grapevine

HAVING successfully rehabilitated itself after the crisis years of the early '80s, it looks like lightning is now about to strike a second time at this Chinoy investment house.

Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.

LRTA to float P2.5B in bonds

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE STATE-OWNED Light Railway Transit Authority is set to raise P2.5 billion in fresh funds through a domestic bond issuance as early as next week.

Proceeds from the bond float, which will be underwritten by HSBC Ltd. and Banco De Oro Capital and Investment Corp., will be used for LRTA's debt refinancing as well as other capital expenditures.

In an interview yesterday, BDO Capital senior vice president Eduardo Francisco said the bonds would be in 7- or 10-year tranches.

"They need the money very soon. We're targeting Dec. 19 as the issue date," Francisco said.

He said the size of the respective tranches

LRTA/ B4

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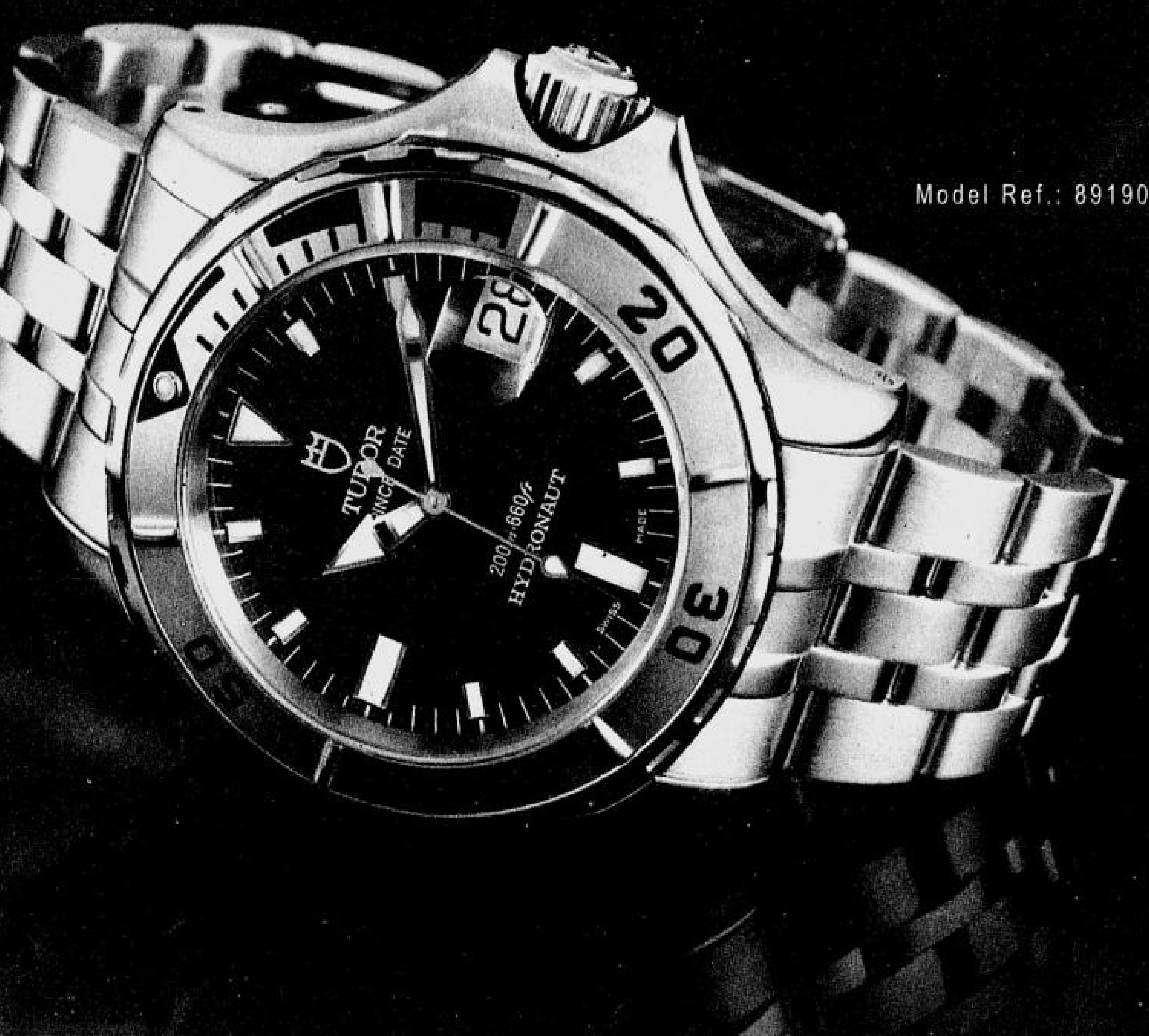

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- G/F, Harrison Plaza

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- G/F, Shangri-La Plaza Mall
- Level R1, Power Plant Mall, Rockwell Center

OUT-OF-COURT SETTLEMENT

Benpres, MWSS resume talks on concession dispute

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE LOPEZES' Benpres Holdings Corp. and the Ondeo-Degremont group of France, the majority owners of Maynilad Water Services Inc., have resumed talks with the state-owned Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System on a possible out-of-court settlement of their dispute over the west-zone water concession.

Benpres told the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday that "good faith" discussions had commenced for the possible settlement of pending controversies between the MWSS and Maynilad.

"The discussions, while very preliminary, are comprehensive and consider all options including the idea of a debt-equity swap," Benpres said.

However, it said any agreement would become final only when all appropriate government approvals had been obtained.

It was earlier reported that the government might swap $20 million worth of receivables from Maynilad in exchange for a 30-percent equity in the concessionaire.

Should the talks fail, a Benpres source said the court-assisted corporate rehabilitation would still continue.

"The discussions are still very fluid," the source said yesterday.

Maynilad is asking the court to give it 10 years to put its financial affairs in order.

The water distributor is already under court receivership, as it sought cover against MWSS and other creditors which may run after $350 million worth of debts. The Quezon City Regional Trial Court has appointed Rosario Bernaldo, managing partner of Bernaldo, Mirador Law offices and of the accounting firm RS Bernaldo and Associates, as rehabilitation receiver for Maynilad.

This developed after the International Arbitration Court ordered Maynilad to pay P6.77 billion in dues to the government and rejected its petition to terminate its 25-year water concession agreement with the MWSS.

MWSS was likewise allowed by the arbitrator to draw on the $120-million performance bond put up by Maynilad when it bid for the franchise in 1997. Benpres guarantees 60 percent of the bond while the balance of 40 percent is guaranteed by the Ondeo-Degremont group of France.

Benpres, which owns 59 percent of the outstanding capital stock of Maynilad, earlier said the recourse to the courts would enable the utility unit to ensure continuous delivery of water services to its consumers.

Maynilad covers the west zone of the MWSS concession consisting of Manila, Pasay, Las Piñas, Malabon, Muntinlupa, Valenzuela, Navotas, Parañaque, Bacoor, Kawit, Imus, Cavite City, Noveleta, Rosario and parts of Taguig and Quezon City.

It wanted to pull out of the water concession agreement with the MWSS after the government failed to approve its bid for a rate increase and to raise water supply volumes.

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Bond Fund - US Dollar	0.9848	0.9673

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Gov't forms panel to study US carriers plea

By Abigail L. Ho

THE GOVERNMENT has formed a five-person committee to study whether or not the Philippine air panel can grant American cargo carriers the right to exercise seventh freedom, following failed air talks between the two countries in July.

An industry source disclosed that the technical working group would decide whether or not it would be right to grant seventh freedom to US cargo carriers, the very demand of the US air panel almost five months ago that its Philippine counterpart refused to give.

The group is composed of Foreign Affairs Undersecretary and air panel vice chair Franklin Ebdalin, Foreign Affairs special assistant Carlos Sorreta, Transportation Undersecretary Edward Harun Pagunsan, Tourism Undersecretary Evelyn Pantig and Civil Aeronautics Board Executive Director Tomas Mañalac.

"In essence, the issue on seventh freedom is back to the air panel. It's just to show the US side that the (Philippine) government has done its part to study its demand for seventh freedom operations," the source said.

Air talks between the Philippines and the United States bogged down in July when the Philippine panel refused to grant the request of the US panel to give American carriers seventh freedom rights.

Seventh freedom refers to the right to carry traffic between two foreign countries with no connection to the home country.

Under the Constitution, an airline is considered a public utility and so must be at least 60-percent owned by Filipinos. These are the only airlines, cargo or passenger, that can fly from Manila to any point allowed in its numerous air transport agreements with other countries.

Foreign airlines servicing Philippine routes, on the other hand, could not just fly to any destination in the world when taking off from Manila or any other Philippine gateway. A US flag carrier, for example, could not take off from Manila and then bring traffic to Tokyo.

The Department of Justice was supposed to render an opinion regarding the legality of granting seventh freedom rights to US carriers, but the source said this opinion would likely not be handed down anymore.

"It looks like the opinion will have to be in accordance with the (executive order) on open skies signed by the President," the source said.

President Macapagal-Arroyo last week signed Executive Order No. 253 implementing open skies for cargo in the Subic Freeport and Clark Special Economic Zone. *(See related story on page B1.)*

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Stocks end flat on Camacho . . .

From page B1

Losers outpaced gainers 30 to 24, with 35 stocks unchanged.

Mall developer SM Prime Holdings Inc. gained 1.61 percent or 10 centavos to P6.30. The stock has pulled back in past weeks and traders said it has fallen to attractive levels considering its stable profit performance.

Benpres Holdings Corp. fell 2.08 percent or one centavo to 47 centavos. The diversified group said it was holding talks with the water utility regulator for the possible settlement of its financial obligations after it pulled out of a water concession it deemed to be unviable. *Reuters*

LRTA . . .

From page B3

would depend on investor appetite, but noted that there was good demand among institutional investors.

The LRTA is an agency attached to the Department of Transportation and Communications. As such, this issuance is expected to carry a sovereign guarantee.

Established in 1980 by then President Marcos, the LRTA operates the first electric rail system in Southeast Asia.

The government, for its part, earlier announced a $210-million modernization program for the electric train system, which involves the acquisiton of 12 new air-conditioned carriages and upgrading of train stations.

LRT Line 1 runs from Baclaran in Parañaque to Monumento in Caloocan while LRT Line 2 covers the 13.8-kilometer stretch from Santolan, Pasig, to Cubao in Quezon City, which will eventually run up to Recto in Manila.

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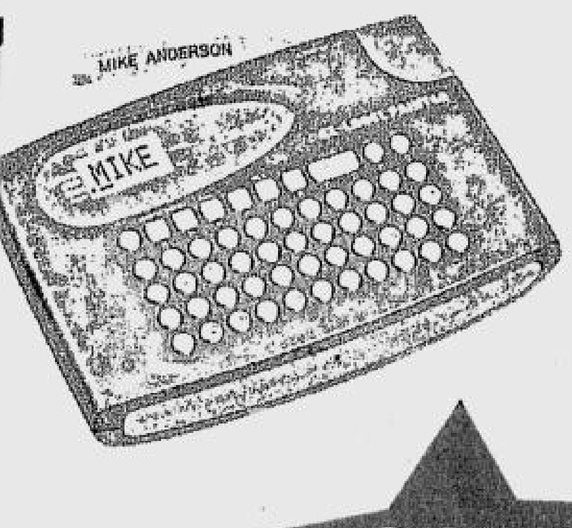

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DTI orders lowering of 'safeguard duty' on imported cement

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry has ordered the reduction of the P20.60 safeguard duty on imported cement after some local cement makers were reported to have taken advantage of the protection by "unjustly" increasing prices of local cement.

Without citing the exact figure, former Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II said the government agency has ordered a "meaningful" reduction of the safeguard duty.

"We have concluded that recent price increases were not warranted. We are adjusting the safeguard measure accordingly," Roxas said in a briefing with reporters immediately before he resigned from his post Wednesday.

The DTI is expected to announce today the exact amount of reduction in the import duty.

Roxas said a recent price monitoring survey conducted by the government agency showed cement prices have already reached a high of P150 per 40-kilogram bag in certain areas in the Visayas and Mindanao, and P120 in some areas in Luzon, including Metro Manila.

The figures were significantly higher than the average price of P80 recorded last year, before the trade department imposed the definitive safeguard duty last June.

Roxas said the decision of the trade department to reduce the safeguard duty was due to the failure of local cement makers to justify the increase in the prices of local cement.

"We find it hard to agree that they have no control in the price of distributors," said Roxas, adding that inducing competition in the market through the reduction of the safeguard duty would be beneficial for consumers and local industries dependent on cement.

Local cement firms earlier said the increase in the price of cement was due to the increase in the costs of power, raw materials and other factors affecting business, and the peso depreciation.

The Federation of Philippine Industries has earlier thrown its support behind local cement makers, saying the safeguard duty was necessary to prevent the influx of imported cement that could lead to factory closures and loss of jobs.

Cement importers, on the other hand, denied there was a threat of an influx of cheap imported cement, adding the safeguard duty only made local cement firms control the market.

Cement consumers have also accused the cement companies of operating in a cartel-like fashion, claiming they deliberately schedule maintenance shutdowns of some plants to curb supply and, in turn, force prices to go up.

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PERMANENT SHIELD FOR FARMERS

Gov't sets veggie tariffs at uniform rate of 25%

By Christine A. Gaylican

THE GOVERNMENT has decided to peg the tariffs on imported vegetables at a uniform rate of 25 percent, Agriculture Secretary Luis P. Lorenzo Jr. yesterday said.

Lorenzo, in an interview yesterday, said the government had pegged the duties on vegetables at a higher rate to protect upland farmers from cheap vegetable imports, which has been eating up their market.

Tariffs on vegetables previously ranged from 7 percent to 20 percent. It was temporarily raised to a range of 20 percent to 25 percent earlier through an executive order, which lapsed in October and will be replaced by a new order to be issued soon by the President.

Lorenzo said pegging the duty on vegetables would not breach the country's covenant with the World Trade Organization.

Vegetables covered by the order are leeks, broccoli, lettuce, cabbage, carrots, turnips, cucumber, legumes, peas, beans, spinach and ginger.

Lorenzo said the new order would make permanent the tariff relief given to vegetable farmers.

The increase in tariff rates on vegetables should appease local farmers, particularly from Benguet, whose products have been dislodged by cheap imports from China and Australia. Imported vegetables flooded the market when the government slashed the tariffs to as low as 7 percent.

Aside from increasing duties, the President has also ordered Lorenzo to implement a revamp in the Bureau of Plant Industry "in order to make the agency more responsive to the needs of Benguet farmers."

Upland farmers have alleged that the Bureau of Plant Industry had allowed commercial importers of salad vegetables to pay tariffs way below the levels allowed by Malacañang.

Doing business while protecting mother earth the Nestlé way

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

CORPORATE CITIZEN

WHOEVER said that protecting the environment and earning a decent profit could not go together was not exposed to the Greening the Supply Chain program espoused by Nestlé Philippines Inc. and propagated by the Philippine Business for Social Progress.

Nestlé's GSC is an ongoing outreach program aimed at helping its business partners raise their level of commitment to environmental protection and improve their environmental performance.

Nestlé chair Juan B. Santos said in an interview that Nestlé's employees had committed themselves to the success of the program because they believed that it would not make sense to keep their knowledge on environmental protection and its benefits within Nestlé.

Sharing the knowledge

These lessons, Nestlé said, should be shared with its business partners, thus, the birth of the program in 2000, the first in the Nestlé world.

"So we put together companies, our suppliers, to teach them, through the program, about environmental management systems because we have the expertise. Our only condition is that if the company will join the program, the top management should buy into the program with passion and later share what they will learn with others," Santos said.

And the benefits of the program can now be be seen clearly.

Packaging firm Cygnus Industries Inc. achieved four environmental milestones: a 5-percent reduction in energy consumption via its on-line continuous power management system; an 85-percent improvement in water usage brought about by its water conservation program; a 60-percent reduction in the use of solvents with its solvent recovery system; and the installation of a low-cost wastewater treatment facility made possible by the in-house sourcing of materials, with technical support from the MIRDC-DOST (Metals Industry Research & Development Center).

Beneficiaries

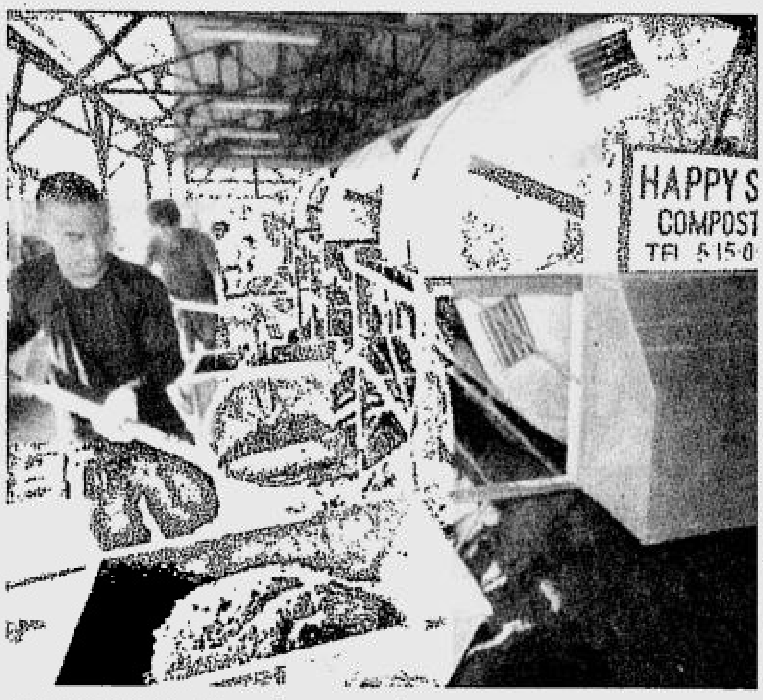
Sugar manufacturer Central Azucarera de Don Pedro has helped a neighboring barangay set up a materials recovery facility, that includes composting of biodegradable materials.

ONE of the beneficiaries of Nestlé which produces food ingredients

Operated by the barangay cooperative, the facility now generates income that fully sustains its operations. The firm has also reduced wastewater by up to 80 percent. The company was one of the awardees of the 2002 Don Emilio Abello Energy Efficiency Hall of Fame for its achievements.

The Philippine Sugar Millers Association also cited CADP as the Most Environment-Friendly Sugar Mill for the second time in August 2003.

Another packaging firm, Megapack Container Corp., reduced solid waste by 30 percent and generated income from scrap materials with a solid waste management program, cut energy use by installing skylights, and expanded its emission abatement program. Megapack key officers also lead the company in planning trees as part of its environment protection.



PRODUCING fertilizers by composting

Another beneficiary was Aliw Alexis Farms, Inc., which produces food ingredients. It saved up to 35 percent on water usage by reusing water from final rinsing for the next initial rinsing; 25 percent on LPG consumption by switching to a bulk container, and acquired its Environmental Compliance Certificate.

It also has a composting facility that takes care of biodegradable wastes.

Influencing others

Oxford Printing and Paper Manufacturing Corp. completely reuses all its plant effluent in its operation. The sludge generated is used as composts in the company's mini-plantation. Oxford has also conducted studies to convert its sludge into construction materials.

To start off these companies in the SGC program, the Nestlé CEO meets with the business partners' CEOs to explain the benefits that Nestle derives from incorporating environment protection into its business practices and the benefits they would get by participating in the program.

Once the CEOs commit to the program, Nestlé offers free assistance and conducts two-day training workshops on environmental management systems and on-site assistance through regular visits by Nestlé environment officers. After the seminars, specific environmental improvement opportunities and action plans are formulated.

Nestlé officers also provide a one-day environment forum every four months for all the business partners' environmental management representatives. The forum updates these employees on regulatory issues as well as further training. They also get the chance to interact and share best practices on protecting the environment.

Volunteerism

Nestlé has so far trained 150 participants in 10 EMS training-workshops. It has conducted 131 environmental visits to 81 participating companies.

Santos said he was personally proud of the GSC program because it has generated a sense of volunteerism within the company, which has "infected" the business partners as well.

Nestle's GSC did not escape the eyes of award-winning bodies.

It was cited during the Asian CSR Awards for Environmental Excellence, Public Relations Society of the Philippines' Anvil Award of Excellence, Pollution Control Officers' Association of the Philippines' Success Story Award and was included in the World Business Council for Sustainable Development's book "Walking the Talk."

For Nestlé, however, the program is not just about getting awards but also promoting the multinational firm's passion to protect the environment.

"We are encouraging our business partners to also tell others about the benefits of the program. If they don't, then it will be like breaking the chain," Santos says.

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INQUIRER 2bU

Veco franchise seen extended

By Ronnel W. Domingo

VISAYAN Electric Co., the biggest electric utility in the region, was given 180 days to continue operation after its franchise expired last Dec. 8, the National Electrification Commission said.

The NEC is a government body tasked under the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001 to renew or cancel utility franchises until June 2006.

Veco may be granted a 25-year renewal of its franchise provided that the internal dispute among its shareholders—the Aboitiz and Garcia groups—would be settled in good faith, the NEC said.

The commission expressed its "deep concern" over the possible detrimental effect of the dispute on the management, operations and investment policies of Veco as a utility.

A squabble stemmed from a share-swap deal between Veco's holding company and Vivant Corp., which led to the dissolution of Hijos de F. Escaño, a firm whose principal asset is its controlling stake in Veco.

The Aboitiz group had sued Vivant, Veco and the Garcias over the deal which, it claimed, was hatched at the expense and without the consent of Hijo's minority stockholders.

In a statement, NEC ex-officio Chair Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr. warned that a prolonged stalemate could result in the crippling of power distribution services in Veco's franchise area, which covers Metropolitan Cebu, including the towns of Consolacion, Liloan, Talisay, Minglanilla, Naga and San Fernando.

CURRENCIES

December 11, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.817929	1.000000	55.355000
Japan	Yen	0.007558	0.009240	0.511500
United Kingdom	Pound	1.426141	1.743600	96.517000
Hongkong	Dollar	0.105364	0.128818	7.130700
Switzerland	Franc	0.646022	0.789827	43.720900
Canada	Dollar	0.625375	0.764584	42.323500
Singapore	Dollar	0.477065	0.583260	32.286400
Australia	Dollar	0.605022	0.739700	40.946100
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.169630	2.652590	146.834100
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.218109	0.266660	14.761000
Brunei	Dollar	0.475678	0.581564	32.192500
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000097	0.000118	0.006500
Thailand	Baht	0.020577	0.025157	1.392600
UAE	Dirham	0.222705	0.272279	15.072000
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.222600	67.677000
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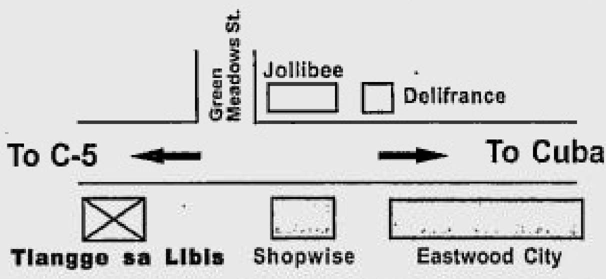

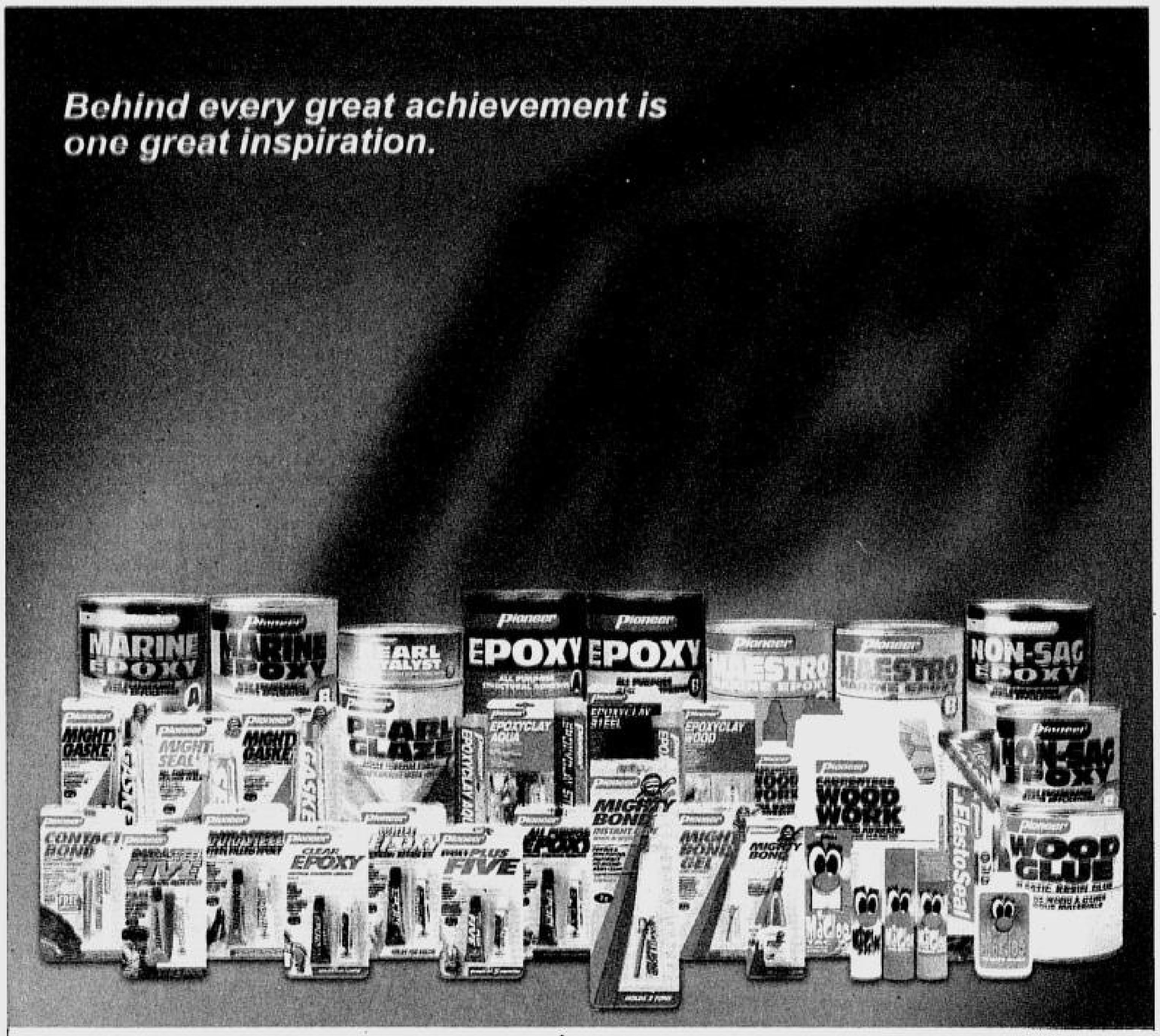

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Gov't seen keeping import safeguards

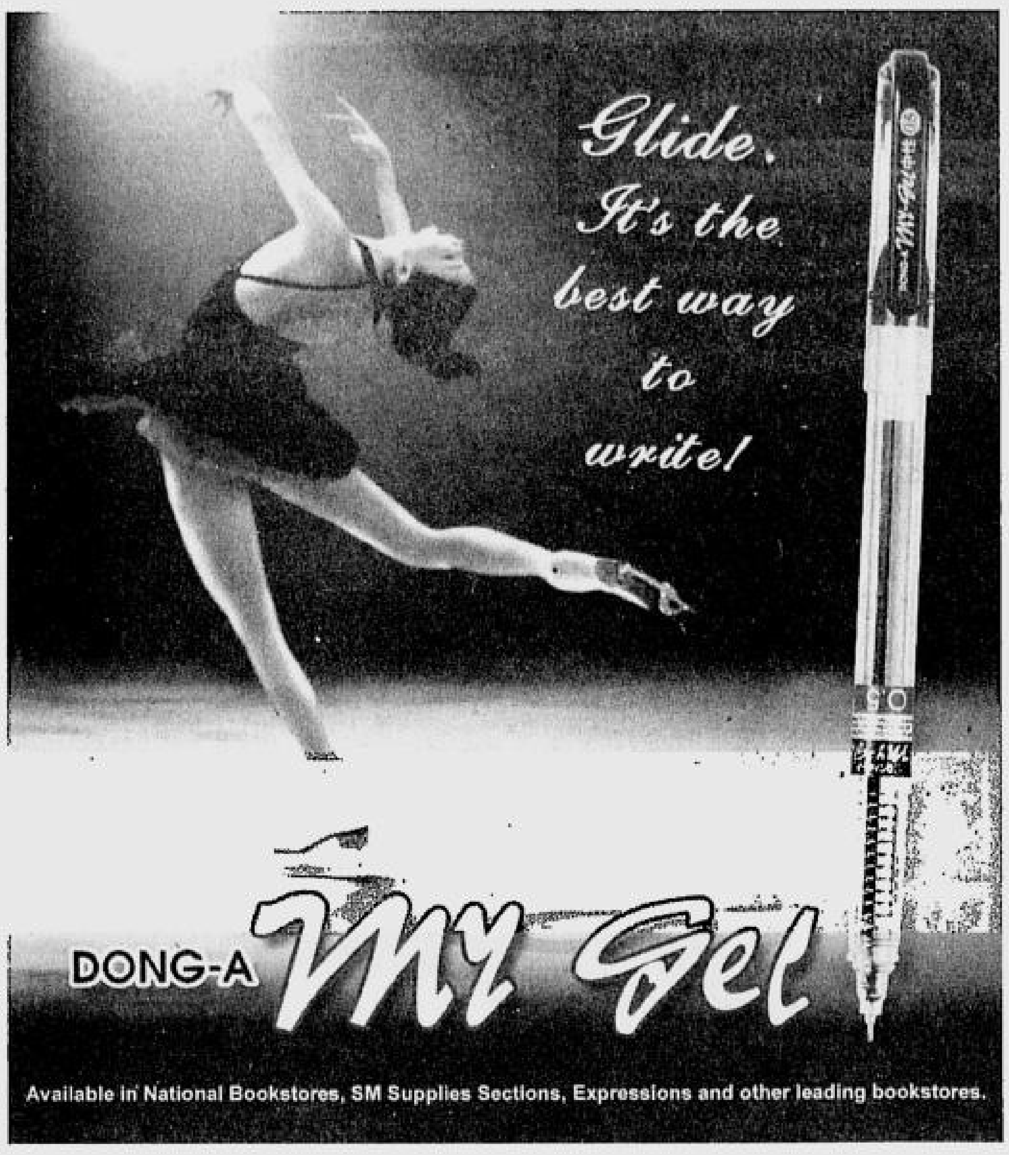
THE MACAPAGAL administration is committed to the defense of local industries against job loss-causing imports. This was declared by Ms Macapagal's campaign spokesman Michael Defensor who said that a cornerstone of the administration's economic program was the implementation of safety nets such as anti-dumping and safeguard measures to save distressed local industries.

Appearing in "Dong Puno Live" last week, Defensor said, "the administration can boast of a good record" in protecting local industries from "injurious imports." He cited the administration's move in 2001 to impose a higher tariff on cement after importers nearly captured one-third of the market by flooding it with Japanese and Indonesian cement. The cement safeguard tariff is historical since this was the first ever safeguard measure to be imposed in the Philippines.

"When cement workers cried foul, we immediately came to their rescue. As a result we saved billions of pesos in investment and thousands of jobs. No government has been that decisive on that matter," Defensor told the Channel 2 late night talk show which had among its guests labor leader Crispin Beltran.

In a later radio interview, Defensor said the administration also applied various safety nets in defending local goods such as ceramic tiles, glass, car parts, and plastics. These industries are among the hardest hit by dumped imports and have suffered serious financial reverses and employment loss since the Philippines signed on to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1994.

"We have also regulated the importation of vegetables. And to those who won't comply, we have hit hard on smugglers of vegetables and other agricultural produce," he said.



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Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	34.5	34.5	34.5	34.5	1,700
Export and Ind. Bank Inc.	0.55	0.55	0.54	0.54	600,000
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	26	26.5	26	26.5	166,000
Philippine National Bank	24.25	24.25	24.25	24.25	15,100
Phil. Savings Bank	26	27	26	27	25,600
Rizal Comm. Banking Corp.	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5	100
Security Bank Corp.	16.25	16.5	16	16.5	25,200
Union Bank of the Phil.	26	26	25.5	25.5	7,000
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
ATR Kim Eng Fin. Corp.	2.16	2.16	2.16	2.16	7,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1710	1710	1710	1710	210
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	60,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1300	1300	1300	1300	690
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	25	25	25	25	3,400
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.66	0.66	0.66	0.66	10,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	765	765	760	760	78,940
ISM Communications Corp.	0.041	0.041	0.039	0.04	3,800,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp	2.7	2.7	2.7	2.7	22,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.82	0.82	0.81	0.82	1,560,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	840	845	835	840	138,330
Philweb Corp.	0.011	0.011	0.01	0.011	10,200,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	14.5	14.5	14.5	14.5	105,500
Manila Electric Co. B	23.5	23.5	23.5	23.5	1,765,900
Petron Corp.	2.16	2.18	2.16	2.18	1,204,000
Salcon Power Corp.	2.04	2.04	2.04	2.04	157,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.25	3.25	3.2	3.2	54,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Engineering Equip. Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	280,000
Sanitary Wares Mfg. Corp.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	50,000
Union Cement Corp.	1	1	1	1	12,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	3.15	3.15	3.1	3.1	58,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	31	31.5	31	31.5	12,900
Jollibee Foods Corp.	16.75	17	16.75	16.75	25,800
Swift Food Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	50,000
San Miguel Corp. A	54	54	53.5	54	118,100
San Miguel Corp. B	63	64	63	63.5	82,100
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	350,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	50,000
Ayala Corp.	4.85	4.9	4.8	4.9	51,786,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.024	0.025	0.024	0.025	900,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.82	0.86	0.82	0.86	950,000
ATN Holdings, Inc.	1.76	1.78	1.76	1.78	15,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.47	0.48	0.46	0.47	3,330,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.19	0.195	0.19	0.195	420,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.28	1,950,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp	17.75	18	17.75	18	332,500
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	200,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	0.0625	800,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.98	1.98	1.98	1.98	80,000
Megaworld Corp.	1.04	1.04	1.04	1.04	10,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	300,000
Music Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	80,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.18	0.195	0.18	0.195	550,000
Prime Media Holdings Inc.	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	10,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	0.98	0.98	0.98	0.98	200,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	40,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.31	0.38	0.31	0.38	790,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Jardine Davies Inc.	12	12	12	12	100
Metro Alliance Hldgs B	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	100,000
Prime Gaming Phils. Inc.	20	20	20	20	1,000
Pryce Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	11	11	11	11	35,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.	0.56	0.59	0.56	0.59	610,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.23	0.23	0.23	0.23	300,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	24.25	24.5	24.25	24.25	85,900
PLDT (10% Pref) Series M	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series N	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	100
PLDT (10% Pref) Series T	10.5	10.5	10.5	10.5	100
Philweb Corp. - Warrants	0.0006	0.0006	0.0006	0.0006	65,000,000
WGA - Preferred	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	2,000
OTHERS					
Far Eastern University	400	400	400	400	390
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.5	5,525,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.135	0.145	0.135	0.145	260,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.2	0.21	0.2	0.21	710,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.02	1.02	1	1.02	8,344,000
Philippine Estates Corp.	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	0.0525	1,500,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.82	1.82	1.8	1.8	33,000
SM Development Corp.	1.08	1.08	1.08	1.08	250,000
Sm Prime Holdings, Inc.	6.2	6.3	6.1	6.3	4,877,000
MINING					
Abra Mining & Industrial	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	20,000,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.38	1.38	1.36	1.36	40,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.31	0.31	0.3	0.31	8,350,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.008	0.0085	0.008	0.008	10,000,000
Manila Mining Corp. B	0.0085	0.0085	0.008	0.0085	26,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	3,000,000
OIL					
Interport Res.	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	0.0038	18,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0036	0.0038	0.0036	0.0038	8,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.0036	0.0038	0.0036	0.0036	114,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	10,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	1,189,400	20,645,845.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	249,166,160	978,799,645.00
PRO	21,499,000	69,523,600.00
Mining	67,390,000	3,016,700.00
OIL	140,010,000	524,050.00
GRAND TOTALS :	479,254,560	1,072,509,840.00

AVERAGES		
Bank & Fin Svc	431.68	DOWN 2.98
Comm'l & Ind'l	2,044.28	DOWN 2.39
PRO	539.20	UP 5.90
Mining	1,643.91	UP 9.54
OIL	1.36	DOWN 0.03
SME	100.00	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	837.84	DOWN 2.76
Composite	1,359.60	DOWN 0.48

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					for downpayment as low as		
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Nissan Frontier Titanium 4x2 M/T	925,000.00	185,000.00	138,000.00	9,885.00	20%	35%	
Nissan Frontier III 4x4 M/T	1,110,000.00	222,000.00	173,000.00	12,036.00	20%	45%	
Nissan Urvan Escapade	870,000.00	174,000.00	121,000.00	9,091.00	20%	20%	50%
Nissan Patrol 4x2 A/T Dsl	2,220,000.00	444,000.00	385,000.00	24,990.00	50%		

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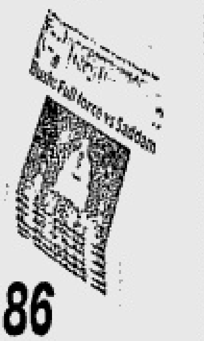
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No confusion in gin market, study shows

GINEBRA San Miguel Inc. recently said it was unfair that rival Tanduay Distillers Inc. was benefiting from GSMI's massive investments in building brand goodwill for its flagship Ginebra San Miguel gin products.

This was stressed by GSMI in a plea filed with the Court of Appeals.

In another development, TDI quoting a study of a research agency, said in a statement that there was no confusion in the gin market as claimed by its rival.

A study of the AC Nielsen Philippines showed that Filipino drinkers could distinguish one brand of gin from another.

In a mock shop study, the research firm confirmed that eight of 10 Filipino drinkers surveyed could identify gin brands from a distance of 4-5 feet regardless of the position of the bottles.

"Consumers can tell the difference between the different gin brands based on their packaging. They rely not only on the label, but also on other details or cues such as the kind and color of the bottle cap," the study said.

"This is particularly true for Ginebra San Miguel, which was distinctly described as having a black bottle cap, in contrast to Ginebra Kapitan's blue cap," AC Nielsen stressed.

GSMI sued TDI earlier this year for alleged trademark infringement and unfair competition following the latter's launch of the controversial Ginebra Kapitan product.

According to GSMI counsel Gilbert Reyes of the Poblador, Bautista and Reyes law offices, GSMI and its predecessors had spent billions of pesos over the past 170 years to build recall, goodwill and preference of Ginebra San Miguel.

Reyes said by using "Ginebra" on the Kapitan brand, TDI might be taking advantage of the popularity of the original Ginebra product.

PNB plans to tap local market via Tier-2 issue

By Elena R. Torrijos

PHILIPPINE National Bank, the country's sixth largest lender, is considering a peso offering of subordinated notes that will qualify as tier-2 capital if a planned dollar-denominated issue will turn out to be too expensive.

The bank had scheduled the issuance of $140 million worth of subordinated notes for the first quarter of next year.

"We're waiting for some stability in the bond market and if it will not find it attractive, we can do a peso issue to be sold to local clients," PNB president and chief executive Lorenzo Tan said in a press briefing Wednesday.

Tan said the bank might do the peso issue on its own through its branch network instead of tapping JP Morgan, which has the bank's mandate to underwrite the dollar issue if and when it pushes through.

Tan explained that the tier-2 notes offering was designed to boost the bank's capital adequacy ratio, which, on a consolidated basis amounted to 14.1 percent and on a stand-alone basis was at 10 percent.

Under the rules of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, a bank must maintain a minimum CAR of 10 percent.

For every P1 billion in tier-2 capital raised, the bank's CAR should rise by 0.8 percentage points, Tan said.

Tan said the bank has funds locked in its subsidiaries as accumulated income. The declaration of dividends by these subsidiaries and return of excess capital could increase PNB's stand-alone CAR to 10.4 percent, he said.

Tan said that a Los Angeles-based subsidiary, for example, has cash of $33 million from the sale of Century Bank.

"We cannot repatriate because we will be hit by big taxes. We are studying how we can utilize those funds to invest in businesses outside the Philippines," Tan said.

PNB aims to post more than P200 million in profit next year from an expected profit of P150 million this year on the back of moves to further improve fee-based income and cut non-performing loans by P16.3 billion.

Delay in Napocor privatization worries IMF

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary Fund has identified the delay in the privatization of National Power Corp. as one of the major factors that contributed to the continued deterioration of the country's fiscal position and the government's inability to sustain a debt reduction program, according to officials.

Napocor's generation and transmission facilities are estimated to be worth between $5 billion and $7 billion. However, investors are afraid to shell out huge investments in assets of a company that is faced to regulatory and legal uncertainties.

Burdened by huge stranded costs arising from several expensive contracts with independent power producers, the state-owned firm has been posting substantial losses that are expected to swell further next year due to its inability to raise its rates.

The power firm suffered from two failed bidding for its transmission assets. However, it has yet to auction off its generation facilities.

Napocor's losses is the second-biggest drag in the country's consolidated public sector deficit, the total gap between government revenue and expenditure.

"The IMF is worried that delays in the privatization of Napocor might continue to bleed the government finances in the coming year and that it might bloat the deficit," according to a senior finance official.

For this year, the IMF is expecting the country's consolidated deficit to hit P290 billion or 6.6 percent of the gross domestic product.

Failure to privatize Napocor assets next year will increase to P116.8 billion the deficit of 14 government corporations from this year's estimated level of P105.3 billion.

The power firm should raise between $1.2 billion and $2 billion from the foreign markets to pay maturing debt and to finance outstanding capital expenditure. Losses are seen to hit P113 billion next year.

Because of its poor financial health, Napocor has been unable to borrow funds for itself without costly guarantees from groups like the Overseas Investment Privatization Corp. or the Asian Development Bank.

Creditors expect to forge deal with NSC buyer

THE CREDITOR banks' negotiations to sell shuttered National Steel Corp. to Global Infrastructure Holdings Ltd., part of the Ispat group of India, have been proceeding smoothly and an agreement is expected to be reached early next year, Omar Mier, executive vice president of NSC's biggest creditor, Philippine National Bank, said Wednesday.

Based on the latest offer made by GIHL, creditor banks will be able to recover, on a present-value basis, 38 percent to 40 percent of their around P19-billion exposure in NSC, Mier said.

GIHL, which submitted the highest bid to buy NSC last month, has reportedly increased its offer to P12.250 billion to be paid over eight years. Land Bank of the Philippines president Margarito Teves said that GIHL had raised its up-front payment to P1 billion from P655 million.

PNB, Landbank and Allied Bank are among the largest creditor banks of NSC. PNB's exposure in NSC amounts to P5.6 billion.

Mier said PNB would need to provide additional provisions for the NSC account equivalent to 22 percent of the present value of its exposure. The provisions or write-offs should be spread over seven years as the sale of the steel firm to GIHL, if it pushes through, would be through the creation of a special purpose vehicle that avails of the incentives of the SPV law.

During a press briefing on Wednesday, PNB officials said the bank has targeted to reduce the level of its bad loans next year by as much as P17 billion through the resolution of large non-performing accounts such as that of NSC.

For this quarter, PNB has projected that the amount of its non-performing loans will go down by P5 billion to P43 billion by the end of this year.

Elena R. Torrijos

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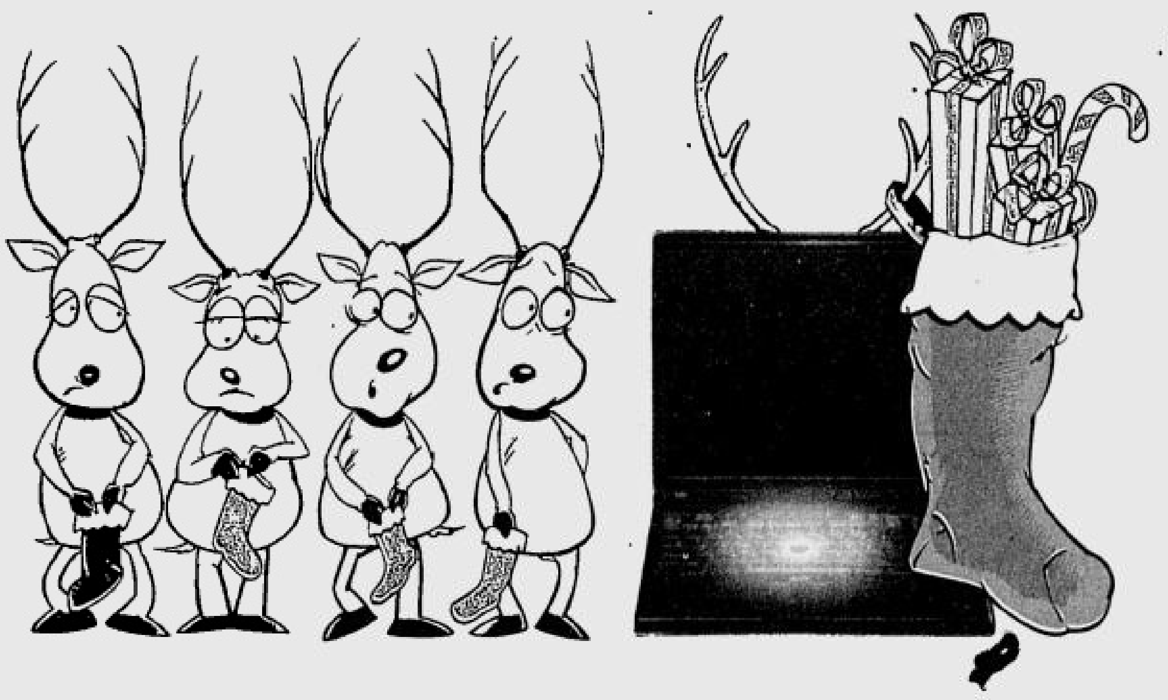

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Davao seen as next IT hub

DAVAO CITY—Business leaders here envision Davao as the next hub for information and communications technology.

Joji Ilagan Bian, chair of the Mindanao Business Council (MBC), said the business sector here planned to develop Davao similar to the way Olongapo and Cebu developed ICT zones.

"This would mean more jobs, more tourism and that would put us back on the (world) map," said Bian, who also sits as vice chair of the BIMP-East Asian Growth Area (Eaga), a four nation group composed of Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia and Philippines which have been working together to help bolster regional growth.

Bian said developing Davao as an ICT hub would require an "intelligent building," a worksite and an upgrade in the telecommunication facilities.

She said human resource was not a problem considering the big pool of skilled workers.

Dennis Jay C. Santos, PDI Mindanao Bureau

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Buying a ham? Read this.

ITS CHRISTMAS time again. And what images are conjured in the mind - food, food and glorious food!

"It is said that during the medieval years whenever kings had their f easts, the pork leg ham would be the prime menu. It is to this reason that tradition calls for ham to be served to commemorate the birth of the King of all kings. And CDO is one in celebrating this commemoration thus we are proud to say that we offer five variants of Christmas hams reasonably prices and equal savory," says CDO vice president for sales and marketing Ed R. Reataza.

CDO unveils its newest treat to the Filipino consumers despite stiff competition from the industry giants. CDO offers several options to suit every shopper's budget. From the classic Holiday Ham to American Ham to Chinese Ham, people can conveniently pick their choice while Pear-shaped hams and Hamon de Bola are also among buyer's options.

The traditional CDO Holiday Ham is boneless and seasoned in exotic herbs and spices while, lean and juicy is how most people describe the pear shape ham. There is a roundshape ham. There is a roundshape hamon de bola that is blended with Spanish seasonings that tastes sweet and spicy making it perfect for the party treats.

On the other hand, American Ham is square and boneless seasoned in all-American flavorings glazed and topped with a rich coating of pineapple jelly that's irresistibly delightful. Considered as the old time favorite, Cooked Chinese Ham is prime bone-in ham seasoned and cooked in the old Chinese tradition. It is cured longer in herbs and spices to bring out that distinct oriental flavor.

"The reason for the different types of ham we offer is for the buyers to have several options to suit their budgets. From the most intricately processed variant to the more affordable yet the product quality is excellent, " says Reataza.

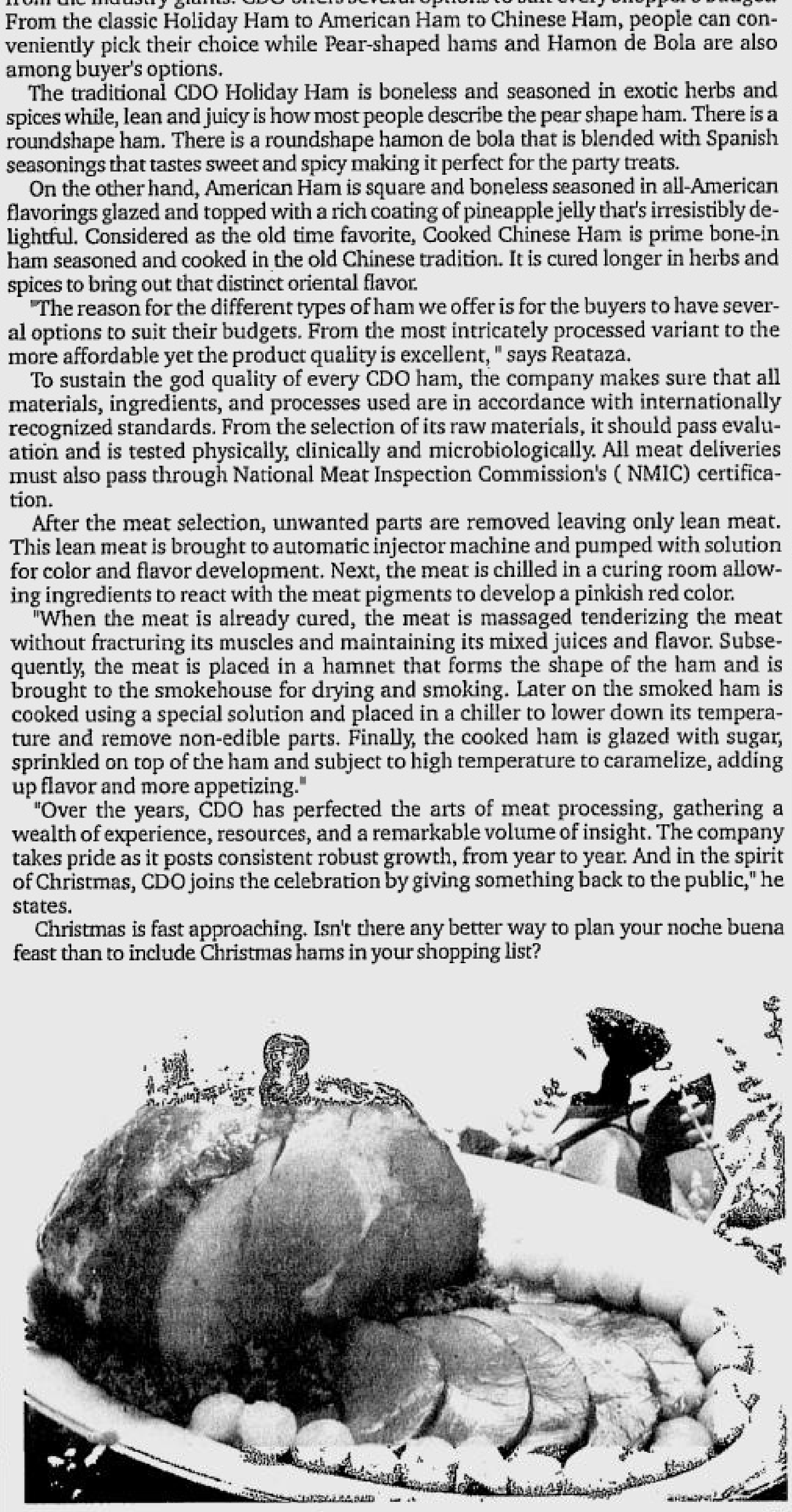
To sustain the god quality of every CDO ham, the company makes sure that all materials, ingredients, and processes used are in accordance with internationally recognized standards. From the selection of its raw materials, it should pass evaluation and is tested physically, clinically and microbiologically. All meat deliveries must also pass through National Meat Inspection Commission's (NMIC) certification.

After the meat selection, unwanted parts are removed leaving only lean meat. This lean meat is brought to automatic injector machine and pumped with solution for color and flavor development. Next, the meat is chilled in a curing room allowing ingredients to react with the meat pigments to develop a pinkish red color.

"When the meat is already cured, the meat is massaged tenderizing the meat without fracturing its muscles and maintaining its mixed juices and flavor. Subsequently, the meat is placed in a hamnet that forms the shape of the ham and is brought to the smokehouse for drying and smoking. Later on the smoked ham is cooked using a special solution and placed in a chiller to lower down its temperature and remove non-edible parts. Finally, the cooked ham is glazed with sugar, sprinkled on top of the ham and subject to high temperature to caramelize, adding up flavor and more appetizing."

"Over the years, CDO has perfected the arts of meat processing, gathering a wealth of experience, resources, and a remarkable volume of insight. The company takes pride as it posts consistent robust growth, from year to year. And in the spirit of Christmas, CDO joins the celebration by giving something back to the public," he states.

Christmas is fast approaching. Isn't there any better way to plan your noche buena feast than to include Christmas hams in your shopping list?



ADVT

Central Mindanao exports up 4.38% as of end-Oct.

By Aquiles Z. Zonio
PDI Mindanao Bureau

TUNA galore at the Tuna Port in General Santos City, Maguindanao. JESS YUSON

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Exports from Central Mindanao posted a 4.38-percent growth or about $12.44 million during the first 10 months of the year.

The Philippine Export Confederation (Philexport) revealed that from January to October, the region recorded some $296.63 million in net export earnings compared to last year's $284.185 million.

Nenita Barroso, Department of Trade and Industry chief here, said canned pineapple, crude coco oil, canned tuna, copra cake/meal/pellets and various marine products were the region's top five exports.

In terms of volume, Central Mindanao, comprised of the provinces of South and North Cotabato, Sarangani and Sultan Kudarat, shipped out 184.408 million metric tons of canned pineapple, 110.663 million metric tons of crude coconut oil, 72.544 million metric tons of canned tuna, 28.333 million metric tons of copra cake/meal/pellets and 11.251 million metric tons of various frozen marine products.

Canned tuna remains the leading export earner posting an export value of $117.096 million.

Canned pineapple followed with export revenue of $75.460, crude coconut oil with $44.867; frozen and chilled tuna loins/steaks/cubes with $12.357-million and frozen round scad with $6.645-million.

Barroso said the United States remains the leading market for the region's export products. Other markets abroad include Europe, Korea, Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

Carol de Leon, Philexport trustee for the South Cotabato-Sultan Kudarat-Sarangani-General Santos (Socsksargen) area, said she was hoping the region's export trend would continue until next year even with the recent implementation of the US Bio-terror Act.

Exporters from around the world were told to register with the United States Food and Drug Administration under the Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point or HACCP standard.

De Leon said they were now in the process of finalizing the registration of exporters from the region.

The US government set December 12 as the deadline.

New malls force Baguio traders to relocate to vegetable town

By Vincent Cabreza
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

LA TRINIDAD, Benguet—A retail boom in Baguio City has benefited this vegetable town, after stiff competition with six Baguio shopping malls has prompted the city's retail industry to move here.

La Trinidad Mayor Nestor Fongwan said the influx of Baguio-based investments has doubled the town's real estate prices, and has forced them to expand their business zones.

But Fongwan said the town is taking the exodus in stride.

"We are not rushing the investors to come to the town in the next seven years until we can develop new business districts for them. For the moment, the investments are pouring into the La Trinidad Highway, which links Baguio to the vegetable towns of Benguet and Mt. Province," he said.

Carlos Honorio Estepa, PCCI national vice president for North Luzon, said institutional Baguio businesses had been worried about competing directly with full-service strip malls.

"Most department stores, for example, do not carry movie houses or food stores that a mall offers, so these shops will be unable to generate the kind of traffic a shopping mall will normally generate," Estepa said.

Before the SM City Baguio shopping mall opened on Nov. 21, the city was already hosting five other shopping malls, including its oldest, the government-owned Maharlika Livelihood Center.

Fongwan noted that at least two Chinese-Filipino establishments had set up four-story buildings in La Trinidad, where they had been slowly relocating their major facilities.

La Trinidad now boasts of a 4.5-percent growth rate, due to the business relocation.

Fongwan said La Trinidad used to benefit from spillover tourism from Baguio. The 8.77-hectare capital town is visited for its strawberry fields and its cheap vegetables.

For a population of roughly 80,000 residents, La Trinidad has been able to earn up to P85 million each year since 1999, Fongwan said.

But Estepa said not all is grim in Baguio City.

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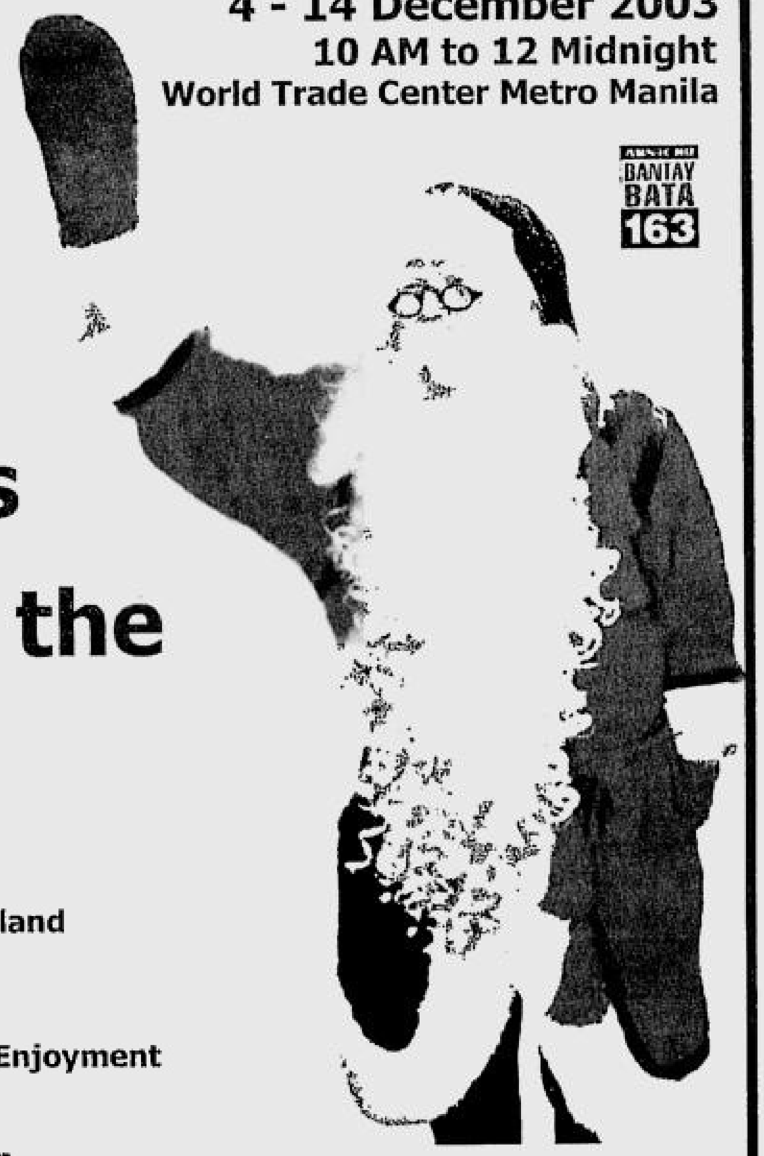

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RP to sell ₱3.5B worth of zero coupon bonds

THE PHILIPPINES will offer P3.5-billion worth of seven-year zero coupon Treasury bonds on Dec. 16 to supplement the government's 2003 budget needs, National Treasurer Sergio Edeza said yesterday.

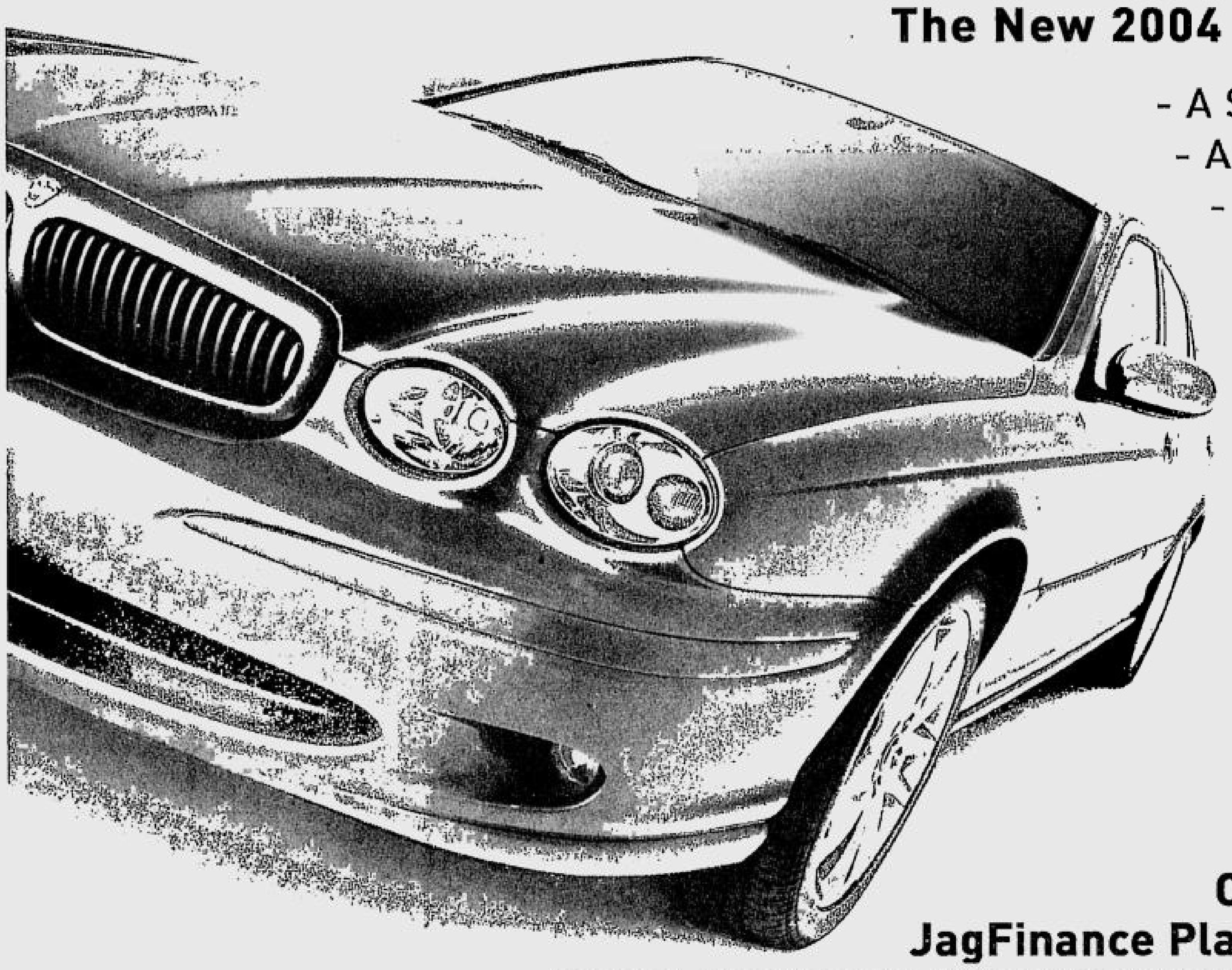
The issue, which will be subject to 20-percent withholding tax, will also be offered to an undisclosed government-owned and controlled corporation (GOCC) during the auction.

"It's for this year's budget," Edeza told Reuters. "But it is also to meet an investment demand from a GOCC. They have money to invest. But we want them to compete in an auction for better price discovery."

The Philippines last sold $175 million worth of 18-month zero coupon bonds at a gross yield of 3.25 percent in August.

With zero coupon bonds, investors deduct the interest rate up front instead of the usual practice of receiving interest payments via coupons.

The bond offer will be the first auction of treasury paper this month after the government canceled its scheduled T-bill and T-bond issues in December following a successful retail treasury bond (RTB) offer. *Reuters*



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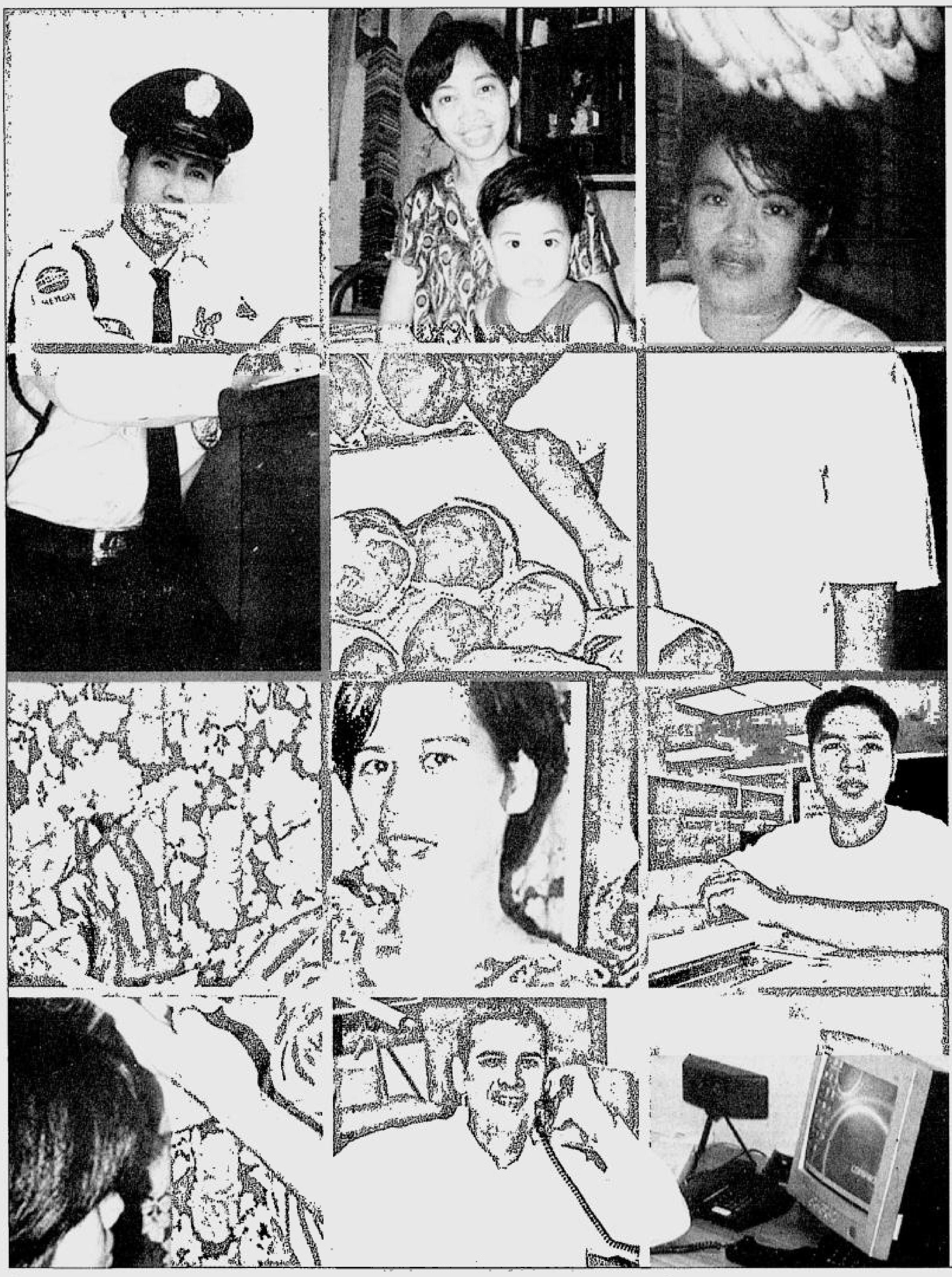

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IT spending in Asia slowed by SARS–report

SINGAPORE—Corporate spending on information technology (IT) services in the Asia Pacific grew marginally in the first-half of 2003 due to the sluggish economic climate and SARS, an independent report said Thursday.

Technology research house IDC said revenues earned by the five largest IT service providers in the Asia Pacific outside of Japan totaled $3.04 billion in the January-June period.

The five IT services companies tracked by IDC in the report include IBM Global Services, Hewlett-Packard and Samsung.

"Several factors were responsible for the modest growth rates observed in the IT services vendor revenues," said Phil Hassey, IDC's regional associate director for services.

"Regional uncertainty surrounding North Korea, the SARS epidemic and bleak economic prospects were key elements which led to the downturn in IT expenditure and investment and therefore the marginal growth rates," Hassey said.

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), which struck the region in the first half of the year, was a big culprit behind the drop in spending, IDC said.

"Apart from the uncertain economic and political environment ... SARS played a massive role in limiting growth in the market, especially in countries like Hong Kong, Singapore, the PRC (China), Korea and Malaysia," IDC said.

"Although China was expected to be a major growth engine for the IT services market, the impact of SARS, and the ongoing economic malaise at the global, regional and local level had suppressed this growth," it said. *AFP*

Cost of corruption at $1.5T a year, World Bank says

MERIDA, Mexico—The cost of corruption represents 5 percent of the world economy—or more than $1.5 trillion a year, according to World Bank figures published at a UN conference on corruption.

Daniel Kaufman, director of global governance at the World Bank Institute, told reporters on Wednesday that the figures were an approximate calculation—since corruption was largely clandestine—yet "realistic." At the close of the second day of the conference of ministers and government officials from some 125 UN member states, a total of 87 governments had signed the first UN Convention Against Corruption.

The convention must be ratified by a minimum of 30 national assemblies before it can go into effect. It is the first document of its kind that is expected to have a global impact.

The convention is a breakthrough, as signers agree to return assets obtained through corruption and assist each others by providing evidence, freezing bank accounts, confiscating property and extraditing suspects.

It also requires signers to beef up and enforce anti-corruption laws, and to include internationally recognized concepts such as money laundering and influence peddling.

The convention treats corruption as something more than a simple crime, saying it destabilizes countries, slows development and erodes democratic institutions, such as elections.

On the other hand, it states that corruption is often driven by poverty which needs to be addressed globally.

Signatory governments commit to conducting business transparently, to hire and promote on merit and to streamline bureaucracies.

The drafting committee began its work in January 2002 and 128 UN members are collaborating in developing the convention.

The United Nations has distributed a manual with 44 legal, economical and political recommendations for countries to fight corruption.

Conference speakers included Transparency International president Peter Eigen, who said the organization's offices around the world were available to provide help and participate in overseeing the recommendations. *AFP*

South Korea to grow 5.2% in 2004

SEOUL—South Korea's central bank on Thursday forecast growth for next year of 5.2 percent on strong indications that the economy is finally on the road to recovery after a difficult 2003.

The Bank of Korea said gross domestic product (GDP) will grow 4.8 percent in the first half of 2004, increasing to 5.6 percent in the second half.

This year's growth forecast is for 2.9 percent.

The economy is showing improvement on solid industrial output propelled by strong exports, although private consumption and corporate investment remains sluggish, the central bank said.

"Our economy is expected to regain a 5-percent growth level in the second quarter next year," said Kim Won-tae of the bank's Monetary Policy Committee.

Real estate prices are showing signs of stabilizing and consumer prices are steady, he added.

The central bank said exports would gain further momentum in the first half and this should jump-start a recovery in capital spending on plant and equipment, which in turn will combine to support overall growth.

It said consumer prices are likely to rise 2.9 percent, down from this year's 3.6 percent.

The central bank left its benchmark December call rate unchanged at 3.75 percent for a fifth consecutive month, stressing the need to continue to support the recovery despite signs of a gradual economic pick-up.

Woori Securities economist Im Dong-pil said the central bank's growth forecast for 2004 is achievable as the global economy is on the verge of a recovery.

"Exports will continue to serve as a major growth engine for the local economy next year, with major markets, especially the US and China, seen growing further," he said. *AFP*

Daimler brings new car to US

DETROIT, Michigan—Daimler- Chrysler AG plans to launch its Smart brand in the US market in 2006, beginning with a made-for-the USA sport utility vehicle, officials said.

The company will launch the as-yet unnamed vehicle in mid to late 2006, and aims to expand the lineup with a view to selling 60,000 units by the end of the decade, Paul Halata, president of Mercedes-Benz USA, said Tuesday.

Smart, with its matchbox size and top-of-the-line fuel economy, has become a chic addition to crowded streets in Europe's capitals.

But while the automaker aims to go after younger consumers with the funky Smart line, it is not planning on transplanting its city-coupe, or roadster in their present form, a Mercedes spokesperson said.

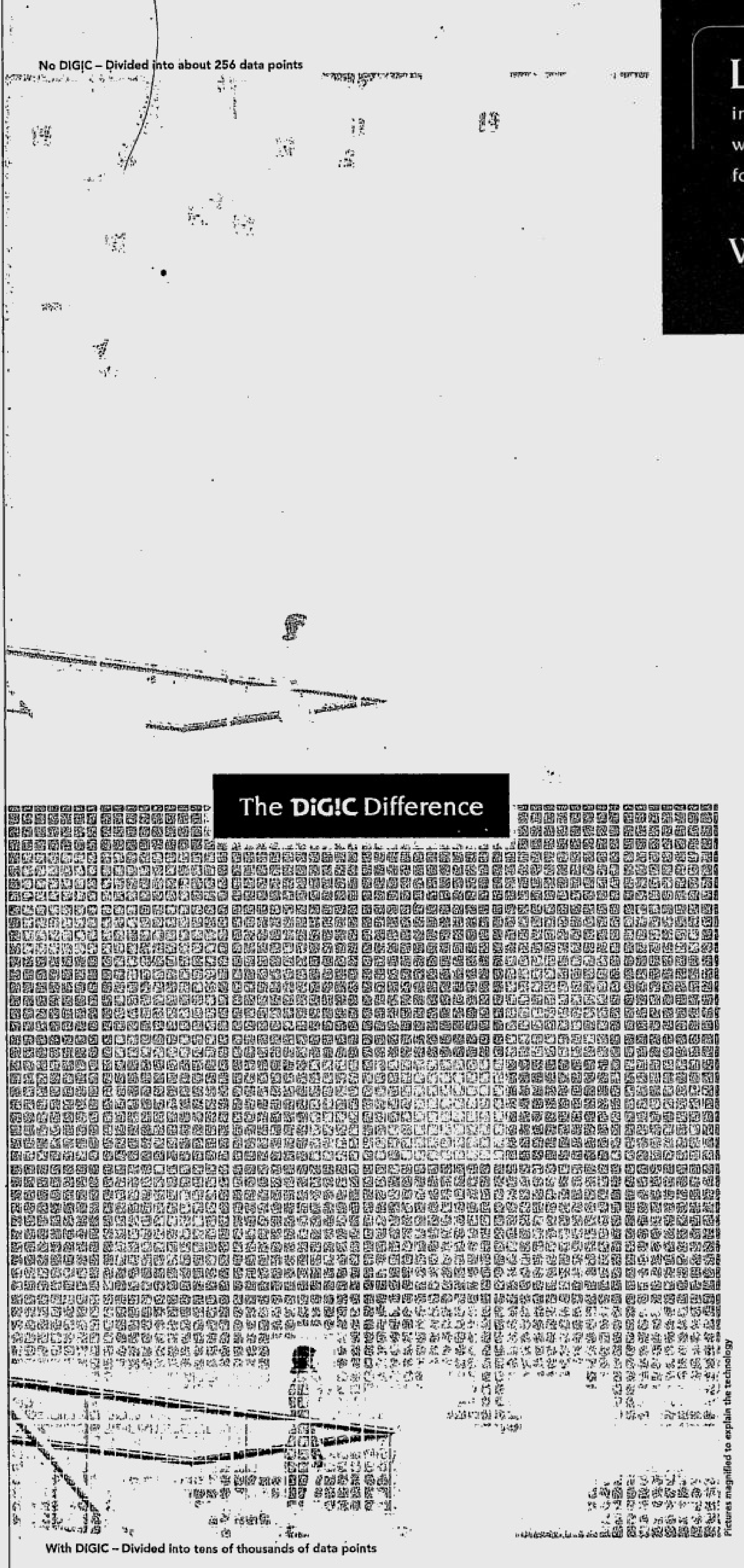
Mercedes Benz USA will handle the sales and marketing for the brand in the United States.

"We're going to have to start thinking younger, which is a great exercise for any company," added Halata, who noted that younger buyers have a completely different outlook from their parents.

The Smart was developed with the Swatch watch company tycoon Nicolas Hayek, but DaimlerChrysler has since taken complete control.

The first models with only enough room for two passengers were launched in Europe in the late 1990s.

Halata also said Mercedes-Benz also will be rolling out a series of new products besides Smart including a diesel-powered version of the E-Class sedan in the spring of 2004, an all-new version of the M-Class sport utility vehicle in 2005, and the new CST crossover vehicle in 2006. *AFP*



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US economy in 'twilight zone,' says forecaster

WASHINGTON—The US economy is in a "twilight zone," showing unusually strong expansion with little growth in traditional areas of manufacturing and services, an economic forecast said Thursday.

The Anderson Forecast of the University of California at Los Angeles projects 2004 gross domestic product growth of 3.6 percent, following an estimated 2.9 percent in 2003.

But forecast author Edward Leamer said the traditional notions of growth have been turned upside down by the puzzling 8.2-percent growth surge in the third quarter of 2003.

"The strength was in consumer durables, consumer nondurables, and business equipment—all material stuff," he said.

"Factory workers aren't making them, the factory sector isn't producing them, and delivery men aren't bringing them, but the goods are nevertheless ending up at your doorstep and in GDP. It's the Twilight Zone economy."

Leamer said he was at a loss to explain the surge in GDP, saying the component factors of economic growth do not add up.

"Since humans don't seem to be making all this stuff, you are probably thinking that it is being made by aliens from outer space working secretly in our factories during the graveyard shifts," he said in his forecast.

The report said the service sector did not explain the surge in economic activity either.

"If anything, the service sectors have shown abnormally weak growth throughout the 'recovery' and even more so in third quarter," the report said.

Asked in an interview if he could explain the paradox, Leamer said, "I don't yet understand it. The correlates of GDP growth are not there. Industrial production, employment, cargo growth are not there."

Leamer, who is a professor of management and director of the UCLA forecast, said his analysis suggests a flaw in the way the government measures GDP. *AFP*

Global Crossing saved from bankruptcy

WASHINGTON—Global Crossing, a symbol of the telecom boom and bust, has emerged from bankruptcy under control of Singapore Technologies Telemedia.

ST Telemedia paid $250 million for a 61.5-percent equity share of the company under a plan approved by a bankruptcy court to allow the company to emerge from Chapter 11 protection.

Under the restructuring plan, the Singapore firm also agreed to buy $200 million in notes to provide additional cash to creditors.

Global Crossing, which built a massive fiber-optic network with some 100,000 miles of cable worldwide before its collapse, will now try to make a comeback in the still-fragile telecom sector.

"Global Crossing today emerges with an unmatched asset—an IP-based (Internet protocol) network reaching more than 500 major commercial centers around the world and serving tens of thousands of customers, including more than 40 percent of the Fortune 500," Global Crossing chief executive John Legere said in a statement late Tuesday.

"Our network, coupled with a streamlined business model and the most dedicated employees in the industry, will cement our standing as a pivotal player in global telecommunications."

Lee Theng Kiat, president and CEO of ST Telemedia, said "ST Telemedia intends to position Global Crossing to be a dynamic, global competitor. We'll be working with Global Crossing's management to integrate and expand services across markets. ... I'm confident that the new Global Crossing will be a model for our industry in both business acumen and practices." *AFP*

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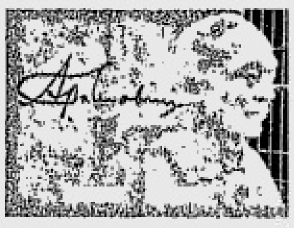
Breathtaking **views from any point--this alone is worth the price at Taal View Heights, which, surprisingly, is very affordable, compared to all the other Tagaytay developments which come at a higher price without even a view.** Also, you'll find yourself right smack in the center of history and culture. Talisay is the birthplace of Apolinario Mabini and it's where the Mabini shrine is found. Nearby is the culturally rich town of Taal, where a variety of Spanish and American colonial houses stand and where 19th century architecture is still alive in churches such as the Basilica of San Martin de Tours and the Church of Our Lady of Casaysay.



What's **more, ownership to Taal View Heights Nature Homes entitles you to club shares at the neighboring Buena Vista Nature Park and Country Club,** where one of its most exciting features is the lighted executive golf course. Designed for the golf enthusiast, this course has a signature hole which boasts an island green with an infinity lake, making it appear as if you can hit your ball right into Taal Lake!

Adding **more distinction is the participation of no less than renowned architect, Augusto Villalon.** Chair of the Heritage Conservation Society and member of the UNESCO National Commission, he designed the aesthetics of the Taal View Heights showcase home, proudly adopting local influences.

And **you'll be even more pleased to discover that we have a team of experts who can help bring your ideas for your farm home to life. There's Zac Sarian, from Agri-Aqua Network International, who can help you naturally grow your fruit and vegetable farm.** There's Carica Herbal Health Products, to help you design a medicinal herbal garden to meet your family's health needs. There's Harbest Agribusiness, to help you create high-yield fruits and vegetables from your own backyard. And many more, all ready and willing to help you create the lot you desire.

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Actual view taken from Taal View Heights

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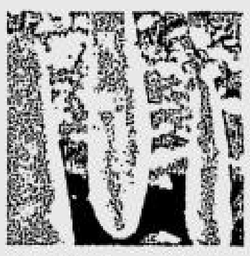

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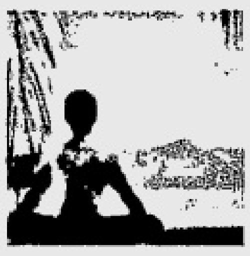
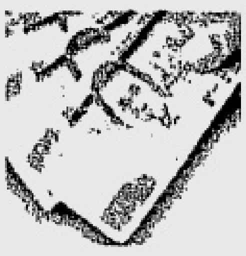


No other can equal the wealth of possibilities in store. You don't only have to settle for a farm home. Taal View Heights is a nature sanctuary, so you have the option to turn your lot into whatever your heart desires: a creative retreat, retirement haven, Zen garden or spiritual sanctum. And you can even consult our team of integrated resource persons to help you.



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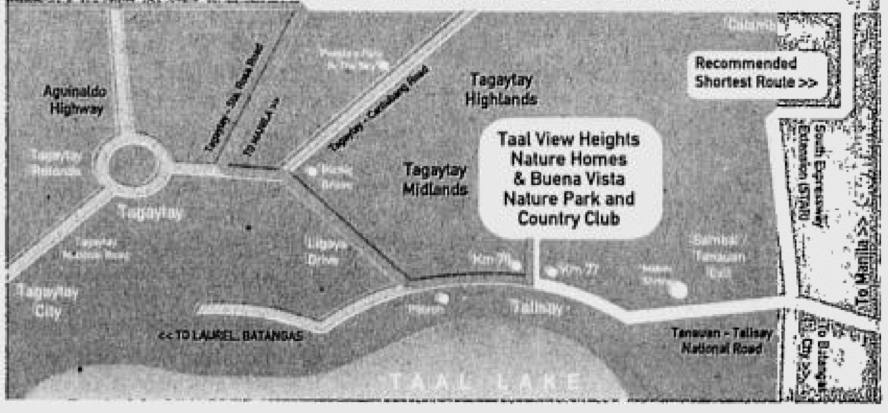

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VOLATILE MARKET PRICES

China, US lead a burst in demand for crude oil

LONDON—With China's economy on the boil and a recovery simmering in other countries, demand for oil will increase faster than expected this year and in 2004, the International Energy Agency said Wednesday.

Demand has surged this autumn in the United States and several other industrialized nations, while Chinese demand appears to be advancing "at a breakneck pace," the agency said in its monthly oil market report.

The global appetite for crude in 2003 will grow by a robust 1.9 percent, or 1.44 million barrels a day, and in 2004 by 1.5 percent, or 1.16 million barrels a day.

The IEA raised its estimates for daily demand growth in the two years by 160,000 barrels and 90,000 barrels, respectively.

Crude supplies grew only half as fast in November as in October, due partly to a leveling off in production from oil fields in the North Sea, and tight oil inventories have exacerbated swings in already-high crude prices.

Although Opec members agreed to cut their production beginning Nov. 1, they still pumped 1.2 million barrels a day above their output ceiling, the IEA said. Analysts say this cushion of excess production has helped somewhat to moderate crude prices ahead of the peak winter demand for heating oil in the northern hemisphere.

The IEA, headquartered in Paris, is the energy watchdog for the world's biggest oil-importing countries.

Chinese demand for crude jumped by 11.5 percent in October, though this growth will slow as China becomes constrained by limits on its capacity to generate electricity, the agency said.

"The pull from the Far East has taken over from the typical US-centric focus as the key driver for the oil market," it said.

Paul Horsnell, head of energy research at Barclays Capital in London, agreed that China's thirst for oil imports has become a significant factor in global markets.

China is a top oil importer after the United States, and both countries are leading the global economic recovery.

"It's been quite a while since we've seen the Chinese and US economies going on all cylinders," Horsnell said.

But while the IEA increased its forecast for worldwide oil demand, it reduced its earlier figures for demand inside countries of the former Soviet Union.

The agency said it had understated the amount of crude that Russia and other ex-Soviet states have been exporting by rail and said it incorrectly classified these exports in the past as barrels consumed inside these countries.

In its report, the IEA reduced its 2003 estimate of oil demand in former Soviet countries by 330,000 barrels a day.

World oil supplies rose in November to 81.7 million barrels a day, up 625,000 barrels a day—or 0.8 percent—from October. Opec contributed 285,000 barrels of this increase, while non-Opec producers such as Angola, Brazil and Russia chipped in the rest, the IEA said.

Iraqi output continued to increase, in spite of sabotage that has forced the closure of one of Iraq's two main export pipelines for crude. Iraq boosted its daily oil production by 320,000 barrels last month for a daily total of 1.9 million barrels, the agency said.

Yet if production trends continue, Iraq will soon reach the limits of its capacity to export oil from its lone operable terminal in the Gulf.

Unless it finds alternative export routes, Iraq may fail to achieve its goal of producing 3 million barrels a day in 2004, the report said.

Russia, which vies with Opec's Saudi Arabia as the world's No. 1 crude exporter, increased its exports by 20 percent during the first 10 months of this year compared with the same period of 2002, according to the official Opec news agency.

However, the IEA argued that Russian output was "critically dependent" on political issues raised in the current dispute between the senior management of Yukos, Russia's largest oil company, and the Russian government. Russia's crude output could suffer if the dispute slows the expansion of its oil majors, the report said.

Oil prices remain high but volatile due to low inventories and geopolitical uncertainties ahead of the winter heating oil season.

Contacts of US light, sweet crude reached a post-Iraq war peak of $33.20 per barrel in November but settled back for a monthly average of $31.06, the agency said. *AP*

China takes Wall Street bull by the horns

NEW YORK—Call it the new "China Syndrome."

The Peoples' Republic is 'de rigueur' on Wall Street this week—a visit to the floor of the New York Stock Exchange by Premier Wen Jiabao on Monday, two hot initial public offerings grabbing all the attention of investors, and the purchase of a firm foothold on the Street by Xinhua news agency.

On Tuesday a Shanghai-based hotel and airline booking company, Ctrip.com International, saw its share price double during its first day of trading on the NYSE, while investors are bracing for one of the biggest IPOs of the year—the China Life Insurance offering.

This $2.6-billion deal is expected to price late on Thursday and start trading next week.

Xinhua Financial Network Ltd., a news agency part-owned by the Chinese government, said on Tuesday it will buy US financial news service Market News International Inc., based in New York.

Unlike the 1979 movie in which scientists feared a US nuclear plant meltdown would bore through the Earth to the other side, the new "China Syndrome" has US investors salivating at an expected flood of Chinese IPOs coming in the opposite direction.

"The economy is right, there (in China), to do these deals," said Sal Morreale, who tracks IPOs for Cantor Fitzgerald in Los Angeles. "Ctrip turned from being very lukewarm to being oversubscribed.

"Look at (Chinese Internet media firm) Sina, it has done well; Internet companies have done well, China Life is in great shape.

"It's sort of like a new frontier," said Morreale. "These two deals show the tremendous potential (of Chinese IPOs)."

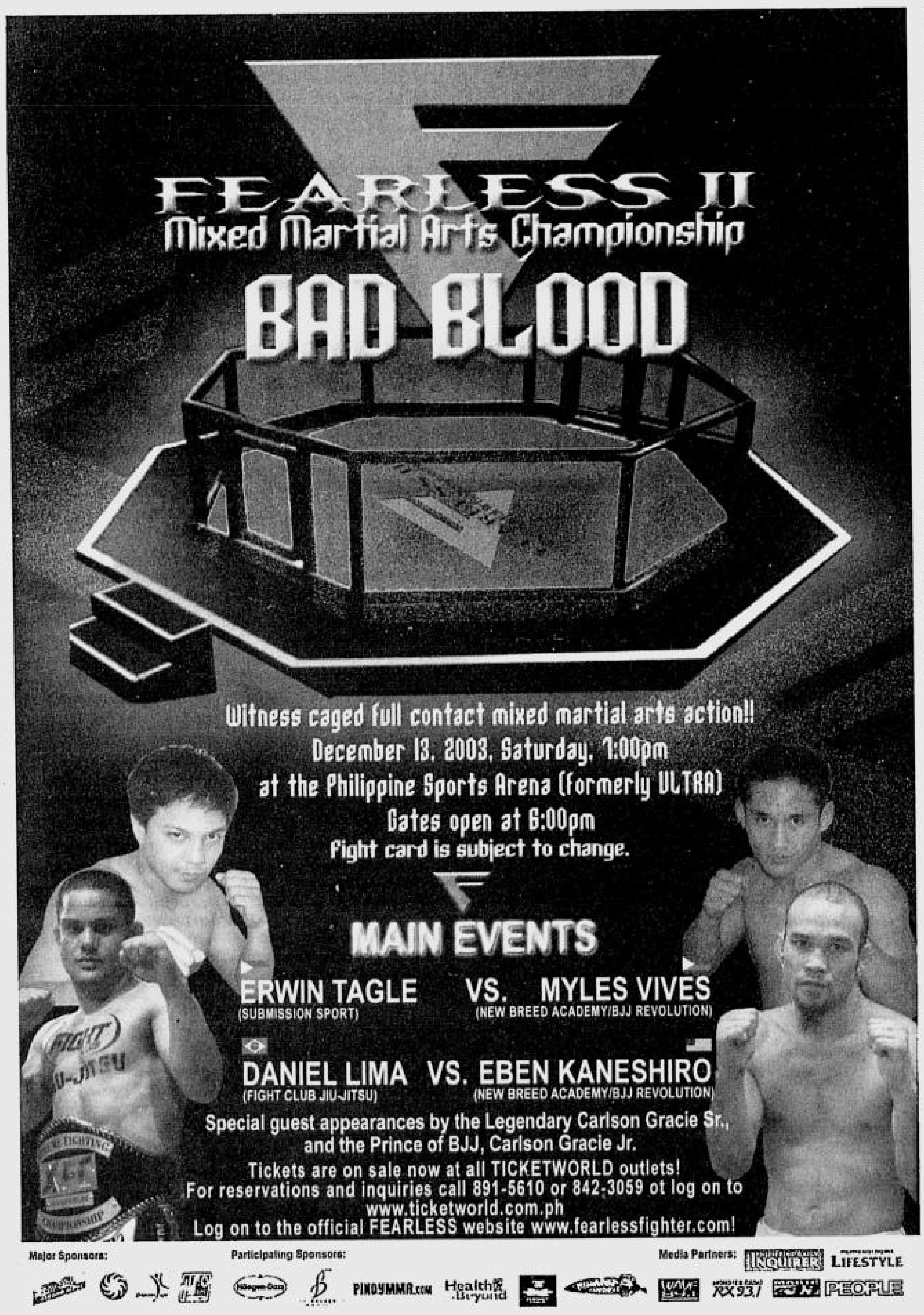
In October, Sina posted a record quarterly profit and predicted strong revenue growth would continue next year as it raised its advertising rates up to 30 percent.

"Investors should keep an eye on what is happening in China deals," said Morreale.

Francis Gaskins of IPO Desktop.com in Los Angeles said there had been two key improvements in the last three years that account for an increase in Chinese companies going public in the United States.

Before 2000, economic development was slow in the Guangdong region near Hong Kong, where many of the new businesses are located. "Firms there were not showing revenues or profits. *Reuters*

JAPANESE Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi (left), escorts waving Laotian Foreign Minister Somsavat Lengsavad, (center) and Malaysian Foreign Minister Sayed Hamid Albar (right) to the meeting room of the Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) and Japan foreign ministers' meeting in Tokyo Thursday. Leaders of the Southeast Asian countries gather in Tokyo to hold the first Asean summit meeting outside Southeast Asia to discuss trade and security of the region. AP



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Dollar steadies against yen

SINGAPORE—The dollar held on to gains against the yen on Thursday, boosting auto and high-tech exporters such as Canon Inc. after suspected intervention by the Bank of Japan saw it recover from three-year lows.

Gold slipped after the dollar recovered, while platinum hovered around 23-year highs. NYMEX crude failed to sustain recent gains despite a larger-than-expected drop in weekly US oil stocks.

Japan's Nikkei 225 index closed up 1.6 percent at 10,075.14, lifted by Canon, Toyota Motor Co. and Honda Motor, which all rose more than 2 percent.

Nissan was up 1.4 percent. The index, up more than 15 percent this year, rebounded from a more than 2-percent fall on Wednesday.

"The market is wondering where the trend is going to go from now. The Bank of Japan may have bought dollars and sold yen but that in itself does not decide everything," said Masaaki Higashida, deputy general manager of investment information at Nomura Securities.

Elsewhere in North Asia, the focus is shifting to the IPO in Hong Kong of China Life to raise up to $3.03 billion, the world's biggest IPO this year.

The offering has helped whip the market for China shares listed in Hong Kong into a frenzy. It is expected to be priced early on Friday.

Other Asian stock markets were mixed. An MSCI index of Asia Pacific shares outside Japan was flat at 0215 GMT.

Some dealers estimate the Bank of Japan could have bought up to $9 billion to protect an export-led economic recovery.

Japanese officials declined to say whether they had stepped into the market, but Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuo Fukuda said:

"I would like you to understand appropriate steps are being taken."

Exports of goods and services make up about 10 percent of Japan's economic growth and the US market is the biggest single destination for Japanese shipments.

The dollar, which has been weighed down by a ballooning current account deficit and security concerns in Iraq, was fetching 108.19 yen, compared with a three-year low of 106.74 yen hit earlier this week and 108.36 in late US trade. *Reuters*

Temasek, HSBC to bid for LG Card

SEOUL—Singapore's state investment agency Temasek Holdings Ltd. and HSBC Holdings Plc. have been invited to bid for South Korea's troubled LG Card Co., a senior government official said on Thursday.

"I am aware that the LG Card side has sent teaser letters to Temasek as well as to other foreign companies and local banks," said Yun Yong-ro, a director general of South Korea's regulatory Financial Supervisory Service.

"GE Capital, Newbridge Capital and HSBC are also included in the list," he told Reuters by telephone.

His comments were in response to a local newspaper report that said Temasek was considering buying South Korea's top credit card firm.

"If Temasek moves to take over LG Card, it is most likely to form a strategic alliance with a local or foreign bank for the bid," the Chosun Ilbo newspaper quoted an unnamed financial source as saying.

Temasek, which has been on shopping spree in Asia, is also vying for a controlling stake in South Korea's sixth-biggest lender, Koram Bank.

Citigroup, HSBC and Standard Chartered Plc. are also competing to buy Koram.

The Singaporean agency is also buying a 51-percent stake in Indonesia's sixth-largest bank in a consortium with South Korea's top lender Kookmin Bank, which recently expressed its willingness to help Temasek if the agency won a bid for Koram.

A number of local banks and foreign private equity funds, including US-based Newbridge, have shown keen interest in buying LG Card, which managed to avert default in November after a $1.7-billion rescue package.

The company, whose 14 million customers account for almost one-third of South Korea's population, is implementing a restructuring that includes reducing its workforce by one-quarter.

HSBC Chairman John Bond said in late November the bank's long-term plans did not include any mega-deals and that it would focus on smaller prey instead. He added at the time potential acquisitions in South Korea were too expensive. *Reuters*

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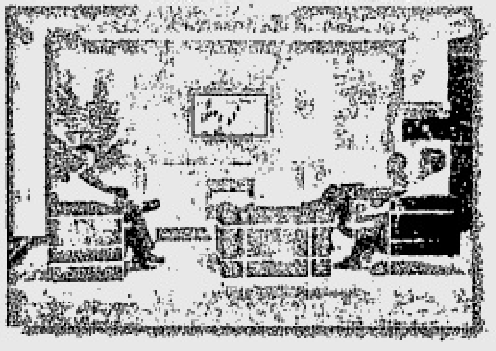
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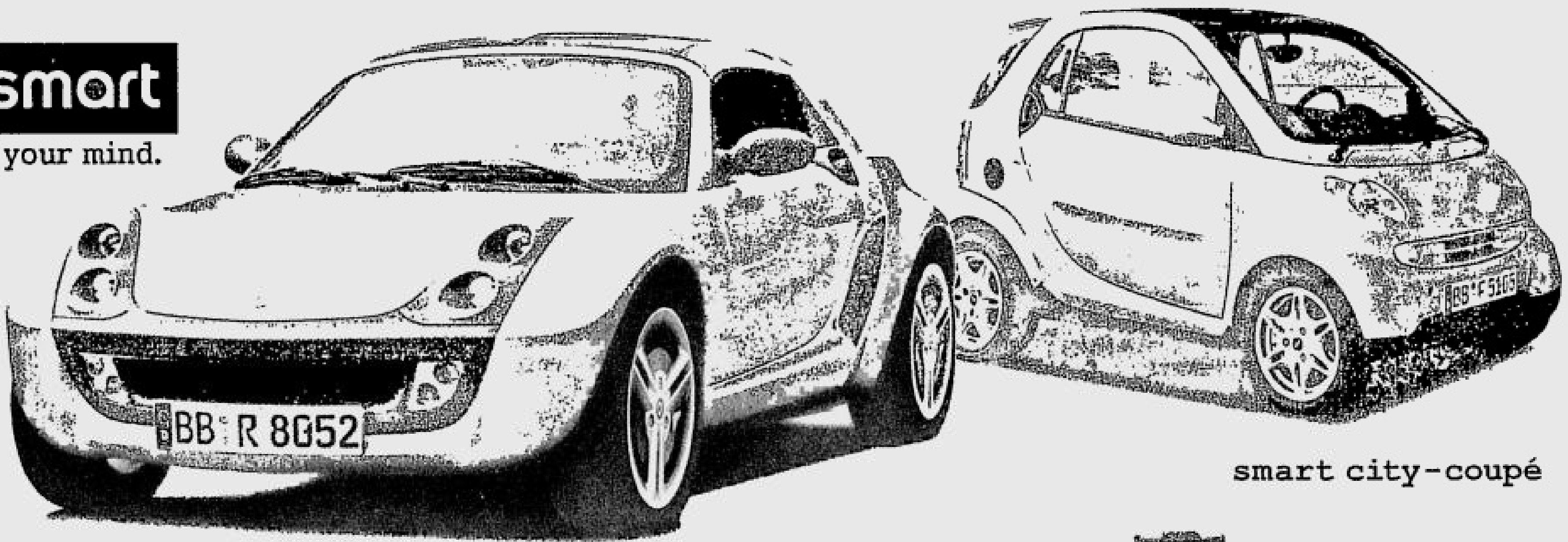

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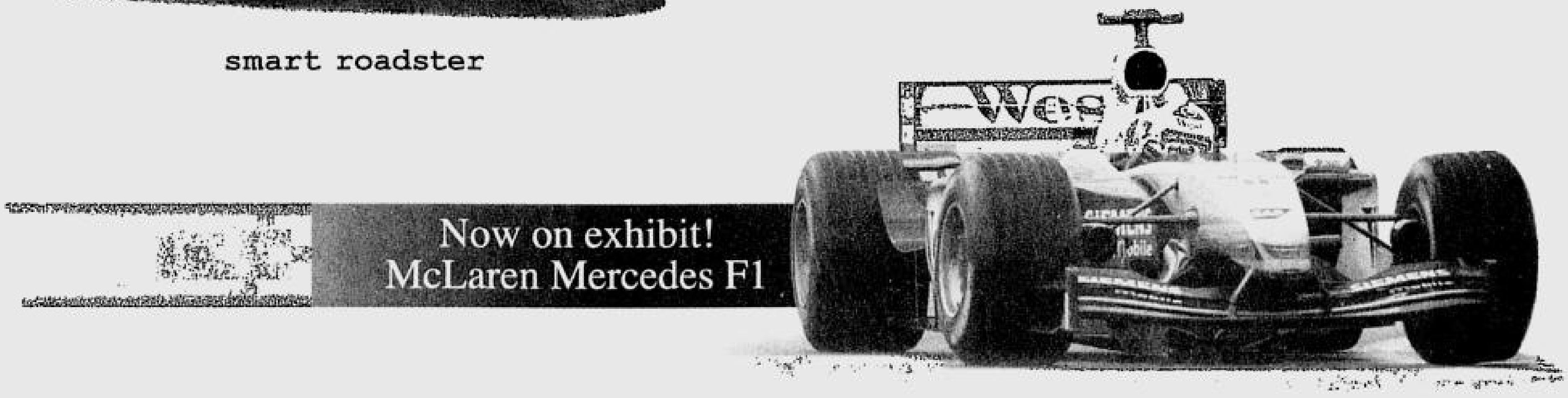

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NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION

In compliance with Section 5 of R.A. No. 9048, a notice is hereby served to the public that RONALD ROLAND C. RODRIGUEZ has filed with this Office a petition for change of first name from ROLAND to RONALD ROLAND in the birth certificate of ROLAND RODRIGUEZ who was born on December 30, 1954 at CEBU CITY and whose parents are RAMON C. RODRIGUEZ and LYDIA CEASAR.

Any person adversely affected by said petition may file his written opposition within this office not later than December 15, 2003.

(Sgd.) LEO G. WABE
City Civil Registrar

(PDI-Dec. 5 & 12, 2003)

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PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF LOSS

Notice is hereby given that the DANGEROUS DRUG ID S2#20501N01 OF Maria Cristina Gorospe,MD was lost.
(PDI- December 05, 12 & 19, 2003)

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Season after season,
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Much love,
PJ

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TransCo

National Transmission Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY SCREENING AND TO BID

Date: December 10, 2003
Contract No. BCMD.2003-007

1. Contract No.: BCMD.2003-007 — Supply and Delivery of 44 Units of Brand New Transportation/Transmission Line Maintenance Vehicles for TransCo in Two (2) Schedules

2. The contract to be performed by the successful bidder shall consist of supplying and delivering the transmission line maintenance vehicles to TransCo-Head Office, Diliman, Quezon City, Metro Manila.

3. The Approved Budget for the Contract to be bid from the Internal Cash Generation are as follows:

   Schedule I – Four (4) Units Boom Truck and Ten (10) Units Light Duty Truck – P30,250,000.00
   Schedule II – Twenty (20) Units Pick-Up (4x4) & Ten (10) Units Pick-Up (4x2) – P28,750,000.00

4. Application for Eligibility is open to manufacturers, suppliers/dealers, distributors, firms who have the legal, technical and financial requisites of the contract bid.

5. Application for Eligibility shall be evaluated using "PASS/FAIL" criteria and only Eligible Bidders shall be invited by TRANSCO in the bidding. All bids equal to or lower than the Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid shall be evaluated based on the responsiveness of the supplier's offer to the contract under bidding subject to Post qualification before an award is made. Bid Prices submitted higher than the Approved Budget for the Contract to be Bid shall be rejected and returned outright.

6. Eligibility & Bid Documents will be available for issuance on December 12, 2003 at the **Bids and Contract Management Department**, Ground Floor, Power Center, BIR Road corner Quezon Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City 1104, Telefax No.: 921-23-08 upon presentation of Letter of Intent and a payment of non-refundable fee of P5,000.00 per schedule per copy.

7. Deadline for submission of duly accomplished Application for Eligibility Forms, statements and Bid Proposals (Technical and Price) shall be on or before January 15, 2004, 1:30 p.m. and shall be submitted at the MMD Conference Room, Ground Floor, TransCo Main Building, Power Center, TransCo, Diliman, Quezon City, Metro Manila.

   If the date is a non-working day or declared non-working day, the deadline for submission shall be moved to the next working day immediately following said date. Late submission shall not be accepted. Pre-Bid Conference shall be held on January 10, 2004 at the same venue.

8. Manufacturers, suppliers/dealers, distributors, firms not yet included in the TransCo's List of registered Suppliers/Contractors, who wishes to participate in the public bidding, in order to facilitate eligibility check/screening, are requested to register with the registration office mentioned above by submitting the following basic requirements, duly notarized, which should be maintained current and updated at least once a year. A certificate of Registration will be issued to suppliers/contractors upon approval.

   - Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) business name registration or Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) registration certificate, as appropriate;
   - Mayor's permit and/or municipal license for the current year;
   - Taxpayer's Identification Number;
   - Notarized statement of the prospective bidder that it is not "blacklisted" or barred from bidding by any government agency, office or corporation;
   - Audited financial statements, stamped "received" by the BIR or its duly accredited and authorized institutions, for the immediately preceding calendar year, showing, among others, the prospective bidder's total and current assets and liabilities inclusive of Income Tax Return and Receipt;

   For foreign bidders, the required documents applicable to entities doing business in the Philippines shall be substituted by the appropriate equivalent documents issued by foreign bidder's country, which documents shall be duly acknowledged and/or authenticated by the Philippine Consulate thereat.

9. TransCo reserves the right to reject any application for Eligibility or all bids without offering any reasons, waive and required formality therein, and to make an award to the bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the government.

10. Additional information shall be furnished upon request. All communications should be addressed to the undersigned at the aforementioned address.

(Sgd.) **WINIFREDO SM. PANGILINAN**
Chairman
Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–Dec. 12 & 16, 2003)

REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
REGIONAL TRIAL COURT
NATIONAL CAPITAL JUDICIAL REGION
BRANCH 5, MANILA

WILKIE M. YU,
Petitioner,
- versus -
SYLVIA Y. TABLADA,
Respondent,

Civil Case No. 03-108619
For: Declaration of Nullity of Marriage

x - x

SUMMONS

WHEREAS, on November 6, 2003, the Honorable AMALIA R. ANDRADE, Presiding Judge of this Court, issued an order in the above-entitled case, which reads as follows:

"Accordingly, and pursuant to Section 14, Rule 14 of the 1997 Rules of Civil Procedure, let summons be served upon the respondent, SYLVIA Y. TABLADA, at her last known address and by publication twice in a newspaper of general circulation to be selected through a raffle pursuant to P.D. 1079."

NOW, THEREFORE, pursuant to Sec. 14, Rule 14 of the 1997 Rules of Civil Procedure, respondent SYLVIA Y. TABLADA is hereby summoned and required to file with the Regional Trial Court of Manila, Branch 5 her Answer to the Petition for Annulment of Marriage filed against her by WILKIE M. YU within 30-days from the date of the last publication of this Summons, serving copy thereof upon the petitioner, C/O Atty. Rodrigo Y. Aranda, Rm. 900 9th Flr., National Life Insurance Bldg., Ayala Avenue, Makati City.

Upon failure on his part to do so as aforesaid, the herein petition shall be referred to the City Prosecutor of Manila for an investigation, to determine whether or not collusion exists between the parties, and to intervene for the State to see to it that the evidence submitted are not fabricated.

Let this Summons together with a copy of the petition be published twice at the expense of the Petitioner in PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER a newspaper of general circulation. Likewise, petitioner shall at his expense deposit a copy of this Summons as well as the petition, in the Central Post Office, postage pre-paid and by registered mail addressed to respondent SYLVIA Y. TABLADA at No. 1448 Kundiman Street, Sampaloc, Manila.

Manila, November 19, 2003.

JENNIFER DELA CRUZ-BUENDIA
Clerk of Court
BY:
(Sgd.) IRENE R. BIEN
Officer-In-Charge

(PDI – Dec. 12 & 19, 2003)

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(1) Teacher I; SC-10; Item No. TCHI-54201 – Bachelor of Secondary Education or Bachelor's Degree plus 18 professional units in Education with appropriate major preparation; No experience required; Eligibility: LET.

(1) Crafts Education Demonstrator I; SG-10; Item No. 3006; CEDDI – Bachelor's Degree in Industrial Education with appropriate major preparation; 1 year experience in teaching vocational course; Eligibility: LET.

(1) Watchman I; SG-2; Item No. WCHM1-30001 – Elementary School Graduate; No experience required; Eligibility: None Required (MC-11; S. 96-Cat. III)

NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION
Geothermal Generation
Bac-Man Geothermal Power Plant Complex
Palayan Bayan, Manito, Albay

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

PR# 3BAC-03-0820/ PB-03-0761 :– Refilling of Hydrogen Cylinders and Carbon Dioxide Cylinders
Cost Estimate P1,344,000.00
Bidding Date December 22, 2003 2:00 PM BMGPPC Conference Room

PR# 3BAC-03-0705/ PB-03-0678 – Supply of spareparts including materials needed in the assembly of mechanical gas extractor gearbox and impellers type GX225/3 of Unit No. 2
Cost Estimate : P7.8M
Pre-Bid Conference : December 18, 2003 / 9:00 AM
Bidding Date December 22, 2003 2:00 PM BMGPPC Conference Room

Interested parties are invited to pre-qualify and to submit sealed bids on the above to be opened in a public bidding at the BMGPPC Conference Room, Palayan, Bayan, Manito, Albay.

Accreditation forms and bidding documents can be obtained from Mondays thru Fridays at the Procurement Services, Ground Floor, Bacman Geothermal Power Plant Complex.

(Sgd.) ROLANDO E. CAWALING
Division Mgr., Admin/Finance

(PDI–Dec. 12, 13, 15 & 17, 2003)

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In Loving Memory
on the Fourth Death anniversary of

Teresa (Titang) Gomez Yuchengco

who peacefully joined her Creator on December 12, 1999.

Her husband, Ambassador Alfonso T. Yuchengco and her family
and loved ones request relatives and friends to join them in
praying for the eternal repose of her soul.

Holy Mass will be offered at:

Teresa G. Yuchengco Chapel on December 12 at 6:00 p.m.
(Podium 4, Tower II, RCBC Plaza)

The Family of the late
Ricardo C. Robles, Jr.
who passed away on December 7, 2003 wish to inform his relatives and friends that a Holy Mass for the eternal repose of his soul will be held on December 15, 2003, 10:00 a.m. at the Santuario de San Jose Parish, Greenhills, Mandaluyong City.

DEATH NOTICES

PEDRO M. COMPENDIO
Joined our Creator on December 9, 2003
at the age of 82.
His body lies in state at Compendio residence M.H. Del Pilar St., Liliw, Laguna.
Interment will be on Saturday, December 13, 2003.

SOLEDAD SY NGO
Joined her Creator on December 5, 2003
at the age of 86.
Her remains lie in state at Arlington Memorial Chapels, 12 G. Araneta Avenue, Q.C.
Interment will be tomorrow, December 13, 2003 at the Chinese Cemetery at 9:00 a.m.

COL. SAMUEL LOPEZ MILAÑEZ SR., AFP (Ret.)
Joined his Creator on December 6, 2003
at the age of 63.
Her remains lie in state at the Chapel of Libingan ng mga Bayani, Fort Bonifacio.
Interment will be on December 13, 2003 at 12 noon after the Mass at 11 a.m.

"For God so loved
the world,
that He gave His
only begotten
Son, that
whoever believes
in Him
shall not perish but
have everlasting life."
John 3:16

Our dearly beloved

LEONOR JARDIOLIN MADRID

(Former Vice-President for Academics University of Iloilo)

Peacefully joined her Creator on Dec. 08, 2003 at the age of 84.

Widow of the late **Judge Roberto M. Madrid**; her children **Roberto Jr. & Elsie, Rene** and **Bernadette**; grandchildren, brothers, sisters, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at her ancestral home at **120 C. Lopez Street, Jaro, Iloilo City.** Interment will be on **Saturday, 13th of December 2003** after the **9 am Mass** at the **Jaro Cathedral.**

ZENAIDA GRAFILO CORVITE

Died in the Grace of the Lord on December 10, 2003
at the age of 68 in Parañaque.

Her bereaved husband **Rodolfo Sr.**; children **Boots, Marlon** and **Irene** (†); children-in-law **Luchie** and **Ferdie**; grandchildren **Bianca, Nicole, Kevin** and **Justin**; other relatives and friends request the pious reader to pray for the repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at the Holy Trinity Memorial Chapel, Sucat, Parañaque. Interment will be on Sunday, December 14, 2003 at the Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at the Holy Trinity Chapel.

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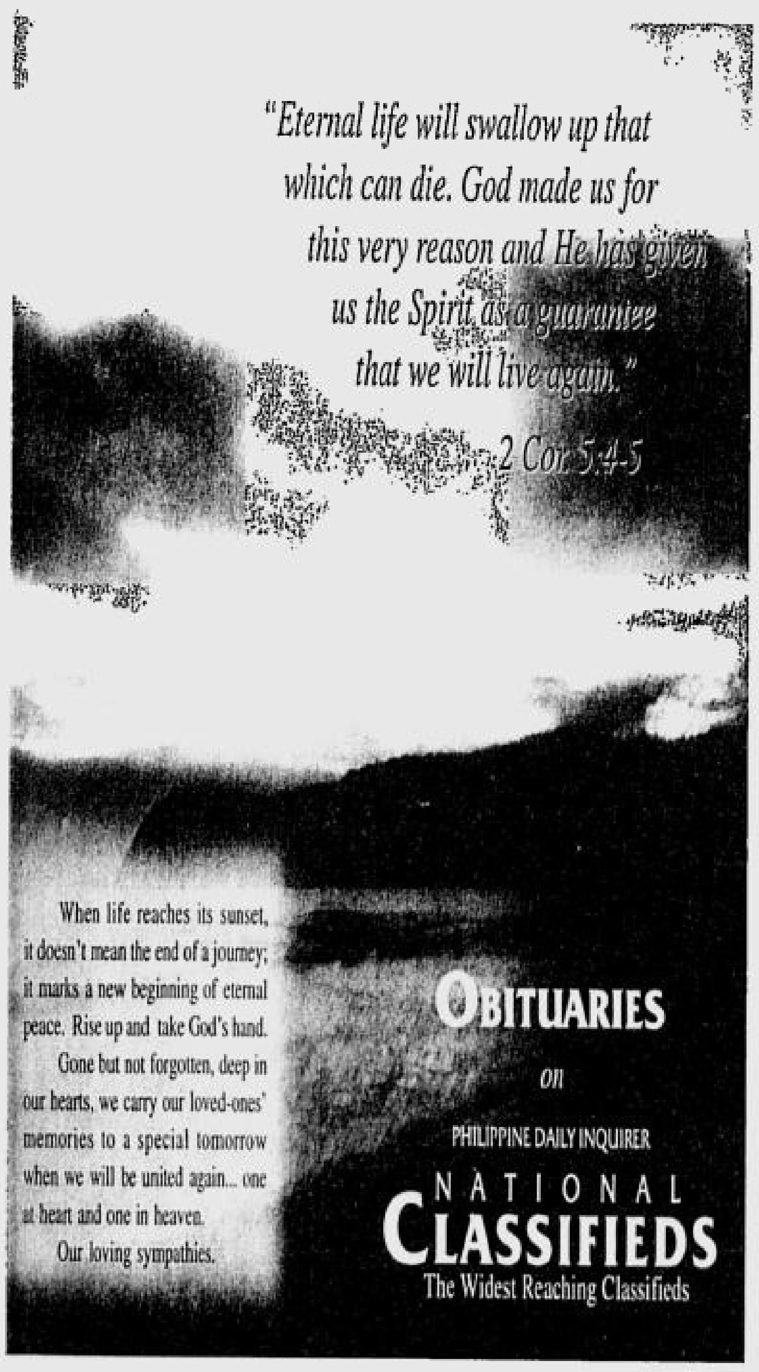
"Eternal life will swallow up that
which can die. God made us for
this very reason and He has given
us the Spirit as a guarantee
that we will live again."
2 Cor 5:4-5

When life reaches its sunset, it doesn't mean the end of a journey; it marks a new beginning of eternal peace. Rise up and take God's hand.

Gone but not forgotten, deep in our hearts, we carry our loved-ones' memories to a special tomorrow when we will be united again... one at heart and one in heaven.

Our loving sympathies.

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Architect, Civil Engineer, Master Plumber
***Former Governor*, Camiguin Province**
***Former Head*, Eng'g Drawing & Civil Eng'g Depts.,**
Feati University

Joined his Creator after receiving his last Sacrament
in Salinas, California, USA on November 28, 2003.

His bereaved wife **Evangeline**; children **Celeste & Conrado Villafuerte Jr., Criselda & Andre Watts, Cynthia, Clarissa & Raul Manuel, Dioscoro Jr. & Lorna, Caroline Cheryl & Romeo Hernandez, Cleo & Joel Reyes, Cielinda & Guillermo Alburo, Elvira & Lito Pacudan** and grandchildren request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the St. Alphonsus Mary de Liguori Chapel Mortuary, Magallanes Village, Makati City.

Interment will be on Saturday, December 13, 2003 at Manila Memorial Park, Sucat, Parañaque after the 1:00 o'clock p.m. Mass.

PHILIP CHRISTOPHER VALDEZ FERRARIS, M.D.

of San Nicolas, Ilocos Norte
May 26, 1968 – December 8, 2003
U.S.T. College of Medicine 1992
joined our Creator at the age of 35
in a vehicular accident.

... A man who touched the lives of many through his courage, humility and selflessness

... A husband to Dr. CELINA L. CAJIGAL-FERRARIS, a father to two loving kids PIA ISABEL and PAULINE MARIE

and whose love, sweetness and laughter will forever be in the hearts of his family and friends ...

Daddy TEOFILO and Mommy CLEOFE; sisters BING-BING and JING-JING, brother DONG-DONG; Mama TANCING; aunties, uncles, brothers and sisters-in-law, cousins, nephews and nieces and other relatives request all readers, especially those whose lives he had touched to continue to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at 18 Lumang St., Ben-agan, Batac, Ilocos Norte. Mass will be offered on December 17, 2003, 2:00 p.m. at the Immaculate Conception Parish Church, Batac, Ilocos Norte and be interred at the Batac Catholic Cemetery.

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MESSAGE OF THANKS • DEATH ANNIVERSARY
REQUIEMS • FREE OBIT DESIGN

MESSAGE OF THANKS
We the Family of the late
MARIA LUZ ("BAYANG") FABIAN
VDA. DE FERNANDEZ
of TARLAC CITY
Who joined the Lord on December 06, 2003.
Wish to convey our heartfelt gratitude to all those who offered Masses, prayers and flowers, visited and kept vigil, joined us in burial rites, and in one way or the other condoled with us and showed love and concern in our time of bereavement.
Thank you so much and God Bless!!!

"I am the way,
the truth and the life. No one
comes to the Father except
through Me."
John 14:6

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4 SCARY MOVIE 3
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3 CABIN FEVER
4 ALIPIN

SM BICUTAN
7763055

1 THE GRUDGE
2 ALIPIN
3 MR. SUAVE
4 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2

SM CITY MARILAO

1 MASTER & COMMANDER
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3 WRONG TURN
4 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2

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3 CABIN FEVER
4 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
5 RUGRATS GO WILD
6 MYSTIC RIVER
7 ALIPIN
8 INTERNET QUEEN
9 THE GRUDGE
10 SCARY MOVIE 3
11 STAR RUNNER
12 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY

SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO
(088) 8592884

1 MASTER & COMMANDER
2 STAR RUNNER
3 THE WISHER
4 LOONEY TUNES

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1 SCARY MOVIE 3
2 LOONEY TUNES
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

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1 **RUGRATS GO WILD**
10:30 FS/10:55 MF/12:45/2:35/4:25/6:15/8:05/9:30 LFS/10:00 LMF/11:25 END

2 **MYSTIC RIVER**
11:15 FS/11:45 MF/2:15/4:45/7:15/9:30 LFS/10:00 LMF/12:15 END

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1 OUT OF TIME 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:55 THX	4 MYSTIC RIVER 10:50, 1:35, 4:20, 7:05, 9:55
2 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2 11:35, 2:05. 4:35, 7:05, 9:40	5 CABIN FEVER 10:45, 1:00, 3:15, 5:30, 7:45, 10:00
3 RUGRATS GO WILD 10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:50	6 GOOD BOY 10:50, 1:00, 3:10, 5:20, 7:30, 9:50
7 INTERNET QUEEN 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:55, 9:00	9 THE GRUDGE 10:50, 12:50, 2:50, 4:50, 6:55, 9:00
8 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00	10 ELF 12:40, 3:00, 5:20, 7:40, 10:00

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Ermita
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536-7809 to 12

1 MYSTIC RIVER - 11:20, 2:10, 4:55, 7:40, 10:00
2 ELF - 10:10, 12:10, 2:10. 4:10, 6:10, 8:00, 9:50
3 CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
4 RUGRATS GO WILD - 11:10, 1:00, 2:50, 4:40, 6:30, 8:20, 10:00
5 GOOD BOY - 10:10, 12:25, 2:40, 4:55, 7:10, 9:40
6 CABIN FEVER - 10:35, 12:50, 3:05, 5:20, 7:35, 9:50
7 JEEPERS CREEPERS 2 - 10:10, 12:30, 2:50, 5:10, 7:30, 9:50

Metro East
Marcos hway
682-8103/09
682-8280

1 LOONEY TUNES
2 RUGRATS GO WILD
3 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
4 GOOD BOY
5 CABIN FEVER
6 MYSTIC RIVER
7 ELF
8 JEEPERS CREEPERS

Novaliches
935-3229 / 31

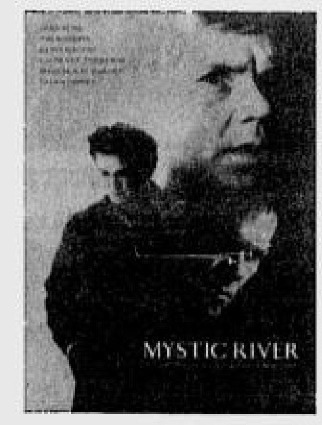
1 RUGRATS GO WILD
2 MYSTIC RIVER
3 GOOD BOY
4 CABIN FEVER
5 THE GRUDGE
6 JEEPERS CREEPERS
7 SCARY MOVIE 3
8 INTERNET QUEEN

Malabon 288-0985/2575		Cainta 240-4661
INTERNET QUEEN	1	MYSTIC RIVER
ALIPIN	2	INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
CABIN FEVER	3	ALIPIN
JEEPERS CREEPERS	4	CABIN FEVER

Sta. Rosa Laguna (049)837-0007		Lipa, Batangas (043)757-3604/312-5870
OUT OF TIME	1	OUT OF TIME
BABAE SA BREAKWATER	2	FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS
STAR RUNNER	3	BABAE SA BREAKWATER
THE WISHER	4	STAR RUNNER
INTOLERABLE CRUELTY	5	INNER SENSES

Star Mills San Fernando Pampanga (045)875-1927 (045)961-3270		Imus (046)471-8188 / 875-5658
SCARY MOVIE 3	1	JEEPERS CREEPERS
BABAE SA BREAKWATER	2	RUGRATS GO WILD
OUT OF TIME	3	ALIPIN
INTOLERABLE CRUELTY	4	CABIN FEVER
COLD CREEK MANOR	5	ELF
JEEPERS CREEPERS 2	6	STAR RUNNER

Bacolod (034)441-0458/59		Iloilo (033)338-8070 to 78
SCARY MOVIE 3	1	SCARY MOVIE 3
FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS	2	GIGLI
UPTOWN GIRLS	3	FIGHTING TEMPTATIONS
DARK BLUE	4	UPTOWN GIRLS
BABAE SA BREAKWATER	5	SEX SCANDAL
CHAVIT SINGSON STORY	6	THE WISHER



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CATHERINE ZETA-JONES

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Engage the enemy.

MAGIC 89.9

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ELF GP 1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00	GOODBOY GP 12:00, 1:50, 3:40, 5:30, 7:30, 9:30	RUGRATS GO WILD GP 12:30, 2:20, 4:10, 6:00, 7:50. 9:40
INTOLERABLE CRUELTY PG13 12:50, 3:10, 5:30, 7:50, 10:10	CABIN FEVER R18 1:25, 3:35, 5:45, 7:55, 10:00	MYSTIC RIVER R13 11:40, 2:15, 4:50, 7:35, 10:20

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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

Tropical paradise with touches of the Mediterranean

EVER dreamed of taking a break from it all to soak up the sea and sun in a cozy and exotic spot somewhere in the Mediterranean? Good news! You can have all of that without having to leave for Europe.

There's a place in Ternate, Cavite that's nestled in its own lovely cove that combines the sultry spirit of a tropical paradise with touches of quaint Mediterranean elan. The place is Caylabne Bay Resort.

Located just a little over a hundred kilometers south of Metro Manila, Caylabne Bay Resort is a mere 90-minute drive from the Metropolis and there are two ways of getting there. You can take the Coastal Road and follow the National Road through Bacoor, Rosario, Tanza and Naic leading finally to Ternate.

The other way is to enter the Southern Luzon Expressway and take the exit at Carmona. Simply follow the road to General Mariano Alvarez, cross General Aguinaldo Highway over to General Trias and head on through to Trece Martires towards Maragondon, before veering left onto Ternate.

Once past the town of Ternate, the well-paved road takes on a different character as it winds up around the hills and mountains leading to Caylabne, providing a pleasant challenge as well as an interesting change of scenery as the verdant rainforest enshrouds you on both sides. If you're lucky, you could catch a glimpse of the resident wildlife that abounds in the area such as monkeys, lizards and snakes, as well as sea eagles gently tracing spirals in the skies above.

After passing through the second of two gates, you should stop by the roadside to peer over the side of the cliffs and view the gently rolling hills and steep jagged cliffs, sandy beaches, rocky shoals and bursts of radiant blossoms amidst nautical whites, and let the cool mountain air and invigorating sea breeze relax you.

The favored hideaway of the rich and famous, Caylabne Bay Resort offers plush Mediterranean style, semi detached suites in Spanish Antillan structures. Each air-conditioned suite features color TV, in-house movies, mini-bar, and hot and cold water.

Most of the suites have their own living room, dining room and private balcony. Caylabne Bay Resort offers several types of accommodations such as a studio unit, or one-, two-, or three-bedroom suites. All rooms are built with high ceilings. The three-bedroom suites share a jacuzzi on the top floor terrace.

Aside from being a vacationer's heaven, Caylabne Bay Resort is an excellent venue for corporate planning or team-building sessions as there are no less than five meeting facilities, the largest of which is the Caylabne Hall, which can accommodate up to 200 persons and is equipped with the latest in audio-visual equipment. The open spaces also allow for a wide array of outdoor activities and colorful theme parties like the Hawaiian Luau.

There is always plenty to do at the Caylabne Bay Resort. Its recreational facilities include freshwater pools, tennis and basketball courts, putting greens, a beach volleyball court, obstacle course, bicycle lanes and various aquasports such as kayak, windsurf, and aquatrikes. There are also shoreline cruises and tours to Fort Drum and Corregidor.

At Caylabne Bay Resort, good taste, gracious living and fine dining is the norm. If you wish to enjoy a sumptuous meal by the sea, then the El Patio Restaurant, which serves Filipino and continental dishes, is highly recommended.

For hopeless romantics, cocktails followed by a candlelit dinner while watching the sunset at the Café Buenavista will surely add spark to any relationship. If you're looking forward to an evening of karaoke, there's the Marina Bar on the breakwater.

Truly, Caylabne Bay Resort offers something for everyone.

Various packages that include room, breakfast and dinner for couples or for families are available. For more information visit www.caylabne.com.ph.

FILIPINO PARTICIPANTS OF ZWIA

Participants in the Zero Waste International Alliance Planning Meeting are shown, from left, first row, Gerry Gillespie, Australia, Richard Green, United Kingdom, Eric Lombardi, United States. 2nd row, Andy Moore, Mal Williams, and Jim McLaughlin of the United Kingdom, Sonia Mendoza, Philippines. Last row, Manny Calonzo, Philippines, Chia-Jung and George Cheng of Taiwan, Carolyn Brooks, Australia, Robert Slater, Canada, Warren Snow, New Zealand, Monica Wilson, United States, Julie Dickinson, New Zealand, and Ric Anthony, United States. Mendoza, president of Mother Earth Unlimited Philippines and Commissioner in the National Solid Waste Management Commission, attended the First Planning Meeting of the Zero Waste International Alliance (ZWIA) in Beaumaris, Isle of Anglesey, North Wales Oct. 19 to 21. She is also co-chair of the Committee on Environment of Soroptimist International Makati Chapter and a member of Gaia. Calonzo is also a member of Gaia (Global Anti-Incinerator Alliance/Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives). Sonia was a speaker and a workshop leader in the Cardiff, Wales and Cork, Ireland Zero Waste International Conferences held Oct. 28 and 29 and Oct. 30 and 31 respectively, speaking on 'Ecological Waste Management-Lessons from the Philippines'.

STANDARD CHARTERED INKS DEAL WITH AIG

Standard Chartered Bank, the first foreign bank in the country and celebrating 150 years of operations globally, recently signed AIG Credit Card Company Philippines Inc for a 3-year P1.3-billion revolving credit facility, as mandated lead arranger and lead bank together with BDO Capital & Investment Corp and Banco de Oro Universal Bank. Security Bank joined as lead arranger and Equitable PCI Bank joined as co-arranger of the facility. The proceeds of the loan will be used for working capital requirements and general corporate purposes of AIG Credit Card Company Philippines Inc. Shown at the contract signing are (seated, from left) Walter Wassmer, Equitable PCIBank executive vice president, Pat Waranimman, Standard Chartered Bank managing director, Rolando Tanchanco, AIG Credit Card director, Nestor Tan, Banco de Oro Universal Bank president, and Rafael Simpao Jr, Security Bank president. Standing, from left, are Ramon David, Equitable PCIBank senior vice president, Eduardo Francisco, BDO Capital and Investment Corp senior vice president, Patricia May Sly, Security Bank senior vice president, Teresita Salonga, AIG Credit Card director and treasurer, Navneet Singh, Standard Chartered Bank senior vice president, and Raymundo Martin Escalona, Banco de Oro Universal Bank first vice president.

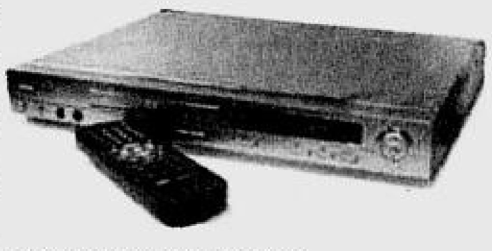
STUDENTS TO WORK FOR A CAUSE

Inquirer has once again expressed its steadfast commitment to the youth by supporting Youth Aid 2003, a national fundraising event slated Dec. 10. The activity saw thousands of high school and college students nationwide reporting for work to raise at least P250 each for the designated youth cause of the year. Shown is Inquirer corporate relations manager Celine Madamba with GiveAsia president Peter Perfecto.

ProductFiles

The world of sound according to Dai-ichi

A SOUND for every taste, a style for every décor-that is a creed that Dai-ichi-the Master of Sound-takes to heart. Using the latest innovations in sound reproduction technology, as well as revolutionary designs that easily match any interior and surrounding, Dai-ichi offers powerful sound presentation solutions to those who require only the best.



Dai-ichi DCS300P DVD player

Its range of products include the specialty speaker system-high fidelity loudspeakers that double up as planters, picture frames and lamps that are tough, weather resistant and perfect for use in parks, gardens, clubhouses, golf courses and hotel lobbies; the Multimedia speaker system using DSX technology, which recreates sound in the way

Mother Nature intended; and Professional speaker system that is easy to carry and set up anywhere, yet powerful enough and ideal for any presentation. Also available are US Audio Professional Amplifiers, the DCS300P DVD Player and the EFD and HTD 302 5.1 Surround Home Theater Systems-the essential choices for those who demand hi-fi speaker performance and are passionate about design and style.

Having been in the business for 27 years, Dai-ichi exports its products to 47 countries all over the world. All Dai-ichi products, whose quality is known the world over, come with a lifetime service warranty. The company also does on-site custom installation based on customers' needs. For more information about Dai-ichi products, visit the showroom and service centers located on the 2nd floor, Raon Shopping Center, Quezon Boulevard corner Raon Street, Quiapo, Manila and the 5th Level, Building B, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City. Call 314-85-18 or 635-3111, or log on to www.daiichi.ph.

The Genesis Coffee invasion

GENESIS, the newest brand of coffee in cans, is now on the shelves of major supermarkets and groceries in Metro Manila. Product samplings were conducted recently in Landmark Supermarket in Makati and Unimart in Greenhills (shown), giving consumers a taste of the three flavors of Genesis Coffee: Iced Coffee Blue Mountain Style, Café Cappuccino and Café Glace.

Watch out for the Genesis booth in your favorite supermarkets and groceries and get a taste of this cold coffee in can that tastes just like the brew served in specialty coffee shops but at a price that is easy on your pocket.

Genesis Coffee in cans is now available in Unimart, Landmark Supermarket, The Makati Supermart, CVC Supermarket, in selected branches of Seaoil Palamig C-Stores and Total La Boutique stores, and soon at SM and Robinsons Supermarket.

Hobby fishing La Finca's latest offer

WHEN La Finca Farm and Country Resort in Lipa City, Batangas opened its doors to the public a year ago, foremost on its list of recreational goals is to create activities that will cultivate family ties and neighborhood camaraderie.

Just recently, La Finca marked the fulfillment on this important goal with the completion of its three-part fishpond. Nestling right at the heart of its 2,200 sq. m. activity hub, the fishpond now offers residents along with their families and friends an opportunity to indulge in a fun-filled pastime as hobby fishing.

Fishing enthusiasts are provided with hooks and baits for a good catch of tilapia, dalag, or hito. After the seemingly restful fishing expeditions, they all can enjoy sampling their grilled catch at La Finca's picnic grove complete with barbeque pits. To cap off a relaxing afternoon, all may stroll at the leisure walkways that crosses over the fishpond and ends at the gazebo. All these amidst the fruit and coconut trees that proudly abound throughout the vicinity.

According to sales and marketing director Lisette Baltazar, La Finca is no longer the residential hideaway it used to be, "I should say it is a complete weekend getaway. Apart from hobby fishing, we will be hosting weekly activities for the whole family. We want people to know that La Finca also serves as a venue for family gatherings and special parties because its exclusivity and has a naturally cool environment."

La Finca is undoubtedly bustling with activity. In fact, it just played host to the awarding ceremonies of the successfully held golf tournament at Mount Malarayat golf and Country Club which is 5 minutes away from La Finca. The sporting event that marked the launching of Isang Hirit Pa Christmas fund Drive spearheaded by former Lipa city Mayor Ruben Umali for the benefit of Lipenos, was the first of La Finca's sponsored private functions.

To get a glimpse of hobby fishing and the country life at La Finca Farm and Country Resort, call 889-8588 or 889-9999 or fax at 944-4532 or visit www.lafinca.com.ph

HCMI WELCOMES HONDA MOTOR CHIEF

Honda Motor Company Ltd president and chief executive officer Takeo Fukui, together with other officials from Japan, recently visited two of Honda Cars Makati Inc (HCMI) dealerships, Honda Cars Makati and Honda Cars Alabang. Fukui was in the Philippines to attend the inauguration of Honda Cars Philippines Inc's P1-billion state-of-the-art transmission-manufacturing plant in Sta. Rosa Laguna. He personally took a glimpse of Philippine dealership operations. This has been the first dealer visit he conducted since he was appointed to the post. Shown is Takeo Fukui (center), together with HCMI general manager Ramon M. Zialcita (right), HCMI president Rufino L. Manotok (2nd from right), HCPI president and general manager, Mitsunari Takano (2nd from left) discussing prior the tour. Honda Cars Makati and Honda Cars Alabang, together with Honda Cars Pasig and Honda Cars Shaw, are members of the Ayala Group of Companies.

Converse 95th year megasale

NOW THAT it's holiday season, it's time to rethink your fashion sense to make a whole new impression. Experimenting with your looks is the way to go.

"We know how young men and women can get adventurous in their choice of clothes, shoes and accessories. They're not afraid to try just about anything to achieve the look they want to project. Individuality is important to them," says Kim Sia, vice president for marketing of Converse Philippines.

Converse suggests going back to the basics - the comfy getup. For starters, change the way you look at your reliable denims. From plain and boring, see them now as exciting and action-packed.

Pair them with your fave shirt to give that always-on-the-go impression. For girls, the lacy Victorian-inspired pieces never cease to spice up either your denim jeans or skirt for those girlish days. Just chilling out? Don baby tees or sleeveless tops which can still give that fresh yet sexy look.

Guys won't go wrong in denim jeans, cool shirt and cap ensemble if they feel sporty for the day. Want to catch her attention? Look best in jeans and shirt topped with your favorite polo.

What are you waiting for? Strut in your most basic and comfy style now. If you don't have one yet, grab them at the Converse 95th Anniversary Sale at the SM Megamall, Megatrade Hall 1, 5th level, Building B. Converse offers big, big discounts ranging from 40 to 80 percent. Converse Megasale is ongoing until Dec. 14.

Bits Clips

Malate Catholic School reunion

THE MALATE Catholic High School Batch 1983 will hold its grand reunion on Dec. 13, Saturday, at 5:30 p.m. at the Coco Cabana Restaurant, Kalayaan Avenue, between Burgos and Rockwell, Makati City. For inquiries, call Alice Agamata at 0926-32423488.

Christmas party at The Heritage Park

THE PHILIPPINE Mortuary Association, in cooperation with The Heritage Park, will hold its Christmas Party dubbed "Llamada 2003" today at 5:30 p.m. at The Heritage Park grounds. The evening will start with The Heritage Park's "Light a Tree for the CHILD" program where guests will witness the ceremonial lighting of the giant Christmas tree installed inside the park. The Mandaluyong Chorus will also serenade guests with Christmas carols to mark the start of the Yuletide season, to be followed by a spectacular display of fireworks. The PMA Christmas Party will immediately follow. This is an annual gathering of funeral home owners, directors and suppliers nationwide. Some of the highlights of this event are updates of the PMA Officers, exciting games and raffles and giveaway items sponsored by The Heritage Park and The York Group. For details, call 845-2340 or 845-2471 to 72.

Bo Razon on iJAZZ

THIS Dec. 13, "iJAZZ at the Shang" goes Latin with the country's leading percussionist Bo Razon and Puro Ritmo and Rowena Michael. Presented by Shangri-La Plaza, Citizen Watches, and No Curfew, in cooperation with Rose Bowl Premium Canned Seafood, the 2nd of the two-part series will showcase fusions of Afro-Latin musical rhythms with the original American jazz idiom as only the country's exponent of Afro-Latin music can. Bo Razon shares his musical experiences with iJAZZ patrons in partnership with Novellino Italian Wines, Tokyo Tokyo, Figaro Coffee Company, TRACKStudios, 105.1 Crossover, NU 107, Joey@92.3, Infocamp, and The Daily Tribune, iJAZZ is a production of Admix Inc.

UP Pi Omicron is 40

THE MOTHER chapter of the Pi Omicron Fraternity, a university-based organization within UP Diliman, marks its 40th anniversary this Sunday at 6 p.m. at the Maharlika Room of Casino Filipino along Nala Avenue. One of its founders, Mayor Pons Soriano of Malasiqui, Pangasinan, will deliver the keynote address. For its 40th year, themed "Excellence Onward", the fraternity will also use the event to launch the Infinite Omicron recognition awards for distinguished members. The fraternity now numbers over 50 chapters nationwide. Interested members who wish to participate can call brod TJ Besa at 896-3836 or 0920-2250080.

Messages

I WOULD like to extend my warmest greetings to the men and women of World Class Financial Insurance Brokerage Inc. (WCF) on the occasion of your launching.

As we look forward to the years ahead, we shall continue to pursue reforms and initiatives to strengthen the financial sector so that it may effectively support the requirements of our developing economy.

I hope that the establishment of World Class Financial will facilitate the growth of businesses and industries by affording access to financial products from respected world financial institutions.

May you succeed in your mission to help alleviate poverty by creating financially stable families through the business opportunities, products and services that you offer.

More power to all of you.

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

MY warmest greetings to the founders, officers and staff of World Class Financial (WCF).

Even after decades of continuing studies and consistently sound operations, the financial sector, reeking as it is with potentials and opportunities, has yet to reach its peak in terms of public patronage. This, in part, is due to the difficult dissemination of numerical information to an occupied populace. Our products need massive exposure, and this makes the birth of WCF - a competent, professional, creative and dynamic group focused mainly on marketing our financial products - a most welcome development. With such strong marketing support, the sector might just yet get the boost it needs to really make a dent in the Filipinos' consciousness.

I fervently hope WCF meets its aim of leading the investment revolution the soonest possible. This, not only because the financial sector stands to gain from your success, but because idealistic intentions deserve to be given a break.

EDUARDO T. MALINIS
Insurance Commissioner

THE FILIPINOS' indomitable spirit has made him rise from any difficult challenge that comes his way. Our rich history has borne a multitude of heroes and heroines that have used their skills and resourcefulness with integrity to bring about the fruition of our goals and dreams to build a better life for our children and ourselves.

The simple dream of financial security is yet another goal that every Filipino strives to achieve. It is not an insurmountable feat, considering the innate strength of our countrymen.

The mission of World Class Financial (WCF) is to help every Filipino achieve this aspiration. The people behind World Class Financial have the combined expertise in financial investments that we can pass on to our members who act as Financial Counselors in their quest for financial independence. Moreover, we have aligned ourselves with the most reputable financial providers in the industry that have products and services to build a strong business enterprise that WCF Financial Counselors can offer to the market.

When every sign in the past had the Filipino looking into a bleak economic outlook, we now have a choice to trek the path of a future of financial stability for everyone.

For years, the dream of financial independence is a vision shared by all Filipinos. Despite the rough and challenging times, this dream continues to cast a ray hope in every endeavor . . . hoping that each undertaking would bring us closer to the realization of this dream.

The time has come to make this dream a reality. World Class Financial is committed to being a positive force for change in the lives of many Filipinos. By inculcating the discipline of savings and wise financial management, WCF aims to uplift the lives of Filipinos and contribute to the economic development of the country. Our goal is to create a win-win experience for our partners--our directors, sales associates, product providers and clients.

WCF has a large portfolio of financial and investment products with strong and competitive positions in the industry. The combined experience and expertise of the management team is well renowned in the field of finance. The desire to succeed within the framework of integrity and professional business ethics translates into a set of ambitious goals for all of us at WCF. I am confident in our ability to maintain a sustained, balanced growth rate and be well diversified, on sustainable and profitable bases.

As WCF helps Filipinos plot the blueprint towards financial independence, we hope that as we achieve our development goals, we could further help our clients go beyond theirs. Together we can make the dream we have today as the reality we will achieve for the future.

ATTY. ELISEO P. DIZON JR.
President & Chief Executive Officer
World Class Financial

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DR. BENITO R. REVERENTE, JR.
Chairman of the Board

WCF
WORLD CLASS FINANCIAL

New company to provide financial health to Filipinos

By Joel V. Nigos

IF YOU are going to look at the financial portfolio of each and every Filipino, you will notice that they present very depressing facts.

A huge 40 percent of our countrymen live below the poverty line. A much bigger percentage, 90 percent, do not have savings and also 90 percent are in debt. A large majority also find it hard to make both ends meet with their salaries alone.

The Philippines also has the lowest savings rate in Asia at only 19 percent (ratio of domestic savings to gross domestic product), while countries such as Hong Kong, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore and Korea are posting a savings rate between 30 to 52 percent.

With only 30 percent of big corporations having pension benefits while personal savings by keeping money in a bank does not accumulate enough profit due to low interest rates, a majority of the working class retires in poverty.

By the time also retirement comes, a Filipino would probably have not much savings to sustain him for the rest of his life. In fact, at the age of 65, 95 percent are dead broke and are dependent on relatives or charity, with only 4 percent being financially independent and only one percent who are truly wealthy.

Consumers are also facing debt trap amounting to a staggering US$3.1 trillion, of which 40 percent is in credit cards; the rising cost of living with family incomes increasing only for 25 percent since 1969 while the consumer price index has increased by 3,128 percent; there is also a lack of security especially when a breadwinner dies.

According to Eliseo Dizon, president and chief executive officer of World Class Financial (WCF), there is a need to face head-on these grim statistics. So in July 1 this year, they founded a new company which aims to lead an investment revolution and promotion of a better opportunity for people by providing the most established and prestigious products in the market. "This will surely help Filipinos in his pursuit of financial health," adds Dizon.

WCF tapped the benefits of both traditional selling and networking. It is being backed up by the most reputable and lucrative financial providers in the country. Its diversified product portfolio will definitely provide people a lot of opportunity for selling.

Product portfolio

Says Dizon, "WCF's product portfolio includes pension plans, educational plans, life/memorial plans, life insurance, personal accident insurance, annuities, mutual funds, health care, credit cards, personal loans, investments, business insurance, property and casualty insurance, qualified retirement plans and memorial parks.

Our business partners include Asia United Insurance Inc., Caritas health shield Inc., Mapfre Asian Insurance Corporation, MAA Insurance Corporation, New York Life Insurance (Phils.) Inc., Philam Group of Companies (Philamlife, Philam Plans, PhilamCare, Philam Asset Management, Philam Insurance Company), philippine AXA Life, Philippine Charter Assurance Corporation, Pioneer Intercontinental Insurance Corporation, Premier Insurance and Surety company, Prudential Guarantee and Assurance Corporation, PRU LIFE of UK, Standard Chartered Bank and Sun Life Asset management Company. We're currently negotiating with other established product providers to continuously expand our product portfolio."

Financial literacy

The financial concept being promoted by WCF is a response to the growing demand for financial security that is not ably supported by the traditional methods such as social security, corporate pension benefits and personal savings.

"Many Filipinos live with an income that barely meets their needs. We are also a consumer-driven economy. To improve the economy, we need to consume more. Many people are in debts. Most Filipinos don't have the discipline and plan to save for the future. They are not able to save not because they do not have the money to save. They have not been taught the habit of savings. Our overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) earn a lot but many of them are not able to save enough. WCF's mission is to teach many people and save part of their earnings in order to assure them of stable future," explains Dizon.

WCF's mission, says Dizon, is to invite people and train them to teach other people to save and avail of various financial products. This would eventually provide them an income opportunity. To do business with WCF, one does not also need capital and experience.

Achievements

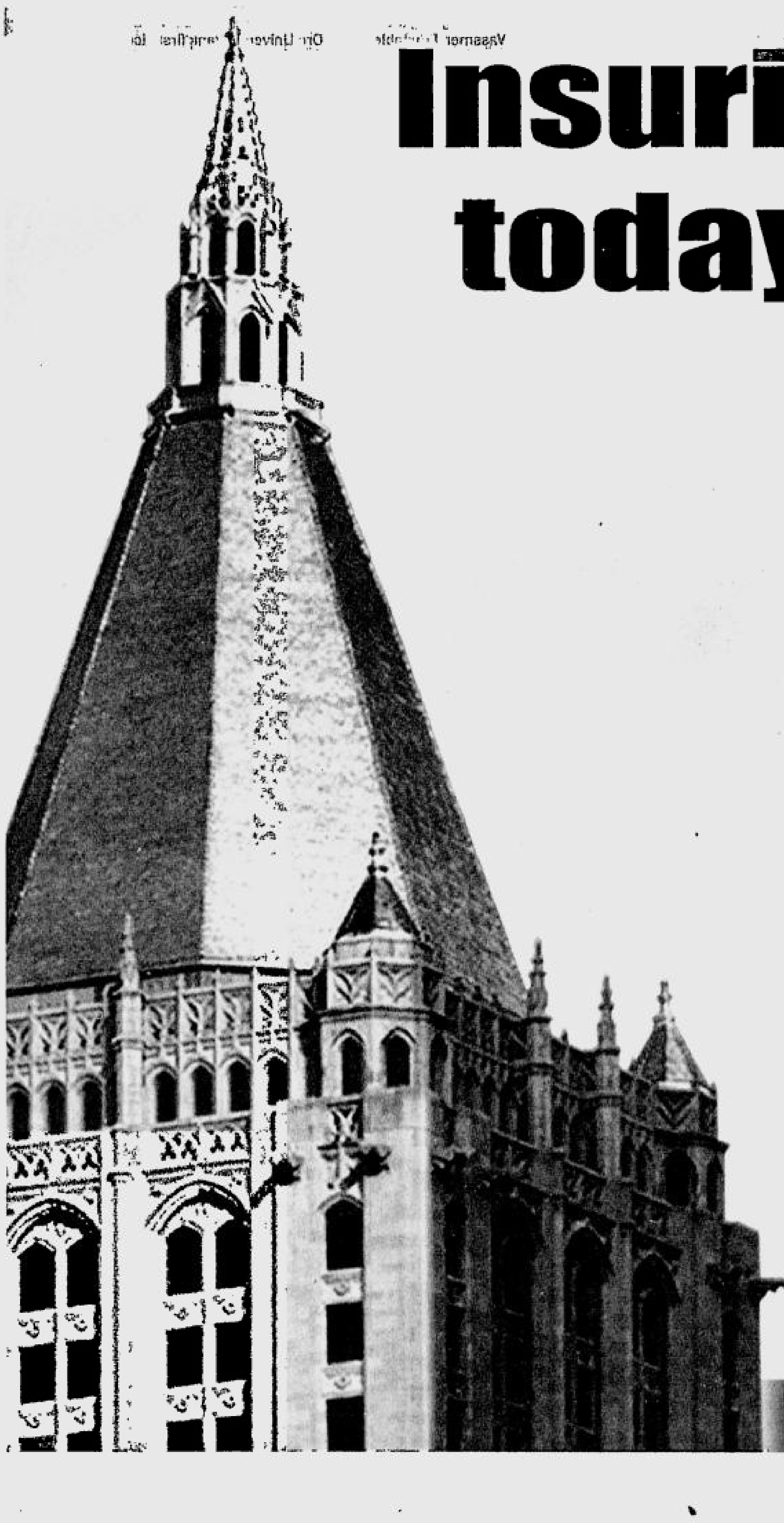
With barely five months after it started its operations, its biggest achievement so far was the forging of agreements with the most prestigious and most respected financial institutions in the Philippines and in the world. WCF thus will carry their products as part of their alternative distribution channels.

"We do not know of any independent marketing company which has achieved this feat. It is an indication of the trust of those companies in WCF, the people behind it, in its mission and vision. We are also gratified by the number of people who have joined our sales force. They were attracted by our prestigious lineup of product providers, the diversified portfolio, and unique marketing plan and compensation system," Dizon says.

Growth prospects

"Based on our initial five months, we expect to grow very fast. We already have over 1,000 sales associates now. With the establishment of business centers in many places, we expect to accelerate the recruitment of WCF sales associ-

COMPANY/B22



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NEW YORK LIFE

www.newyorklife.ph

Secure your child's future with Philam Plans

THE FIRST thing Diana worried about when her dear husband met an accident was her child's education. She was a new mother, having just recently given birth to her first-born daughter. She is working as a customer service representative in a call center in Makati, earning just above the minimum wage to answer for her small family's needs. Before he died her husband drove his own FX to provide added income for the family.

Between the two of them, their earnings could satisfy their daily requirements-pay for rent, purchase monthly grocery items and food, pay for utilities as well as cover for the occasional movie or dinner in a favorite restaurant.

Now that she is a solo parent however, Diana was unsure if her single income could answer for her and little Anya's needs. Of particular concern is little Anya's education. Rather than leaving everything to fate and adopting a bahala na attitude, however, Diana resolved to find a way to save for Anya's schooling.

Augmenting her monthly salary by selling prepaid cards at the office, Diana opened a bank account where she can place her savings for Anya's education. There would be times when she was tempted to get a small amount for a small luxury for her and her child but keeping in mind the proceeds of the funds, she would be able to resist the temptation.

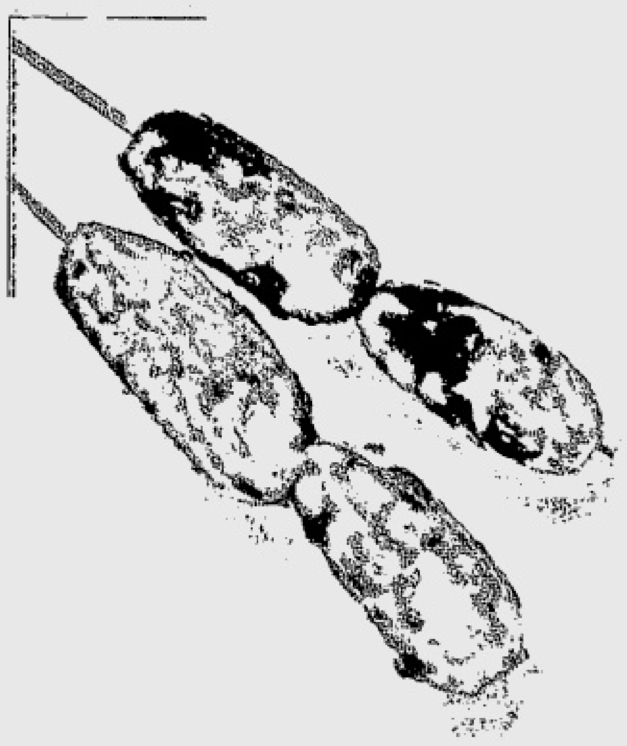
After reviewing her account balance after a few months, however, she felt frustrated about the slow progress she was making. This was when she came upon the concept of pre-need planning. According to the brochure she came across with, pre-need planning is preparing beforehand for a future inevitable need. By saving and purchasing for a plan now, you can actually see your investment grow until the plan's maturity.

To secure Anya's education, Diana got a Pangako Education Plan from Philam Plans, the leading pre-need company affiliated with financial services industry giants Philamlife and American International Group. Not only does it provide funds for tuition, it can cover for other expenses as well, like dorm fees, transportation, books, etc. This is because benefits are paid directly to the planholder and not the school, allowing for greater flexibility and responsiveness.

Diana is also insured against accidents, disability and dismemberment throughout the time the plan is in force. But what was great about the plan is that it awards a gift upon graduation of the nominee. This is equal to 100 percent of total plan cost. This can be used for tuition fee for higher studies, capital for a business and funds for daily needs.

With all these features, Diana is even more amazed at how affordable the plan is-with the most affordable package equivalent to only P20 daily savings, payable either through monthly, quarterly, semi-annual or annual mode.

With the Pangako Education Plan, Diana is now more confident about her daughter's future.



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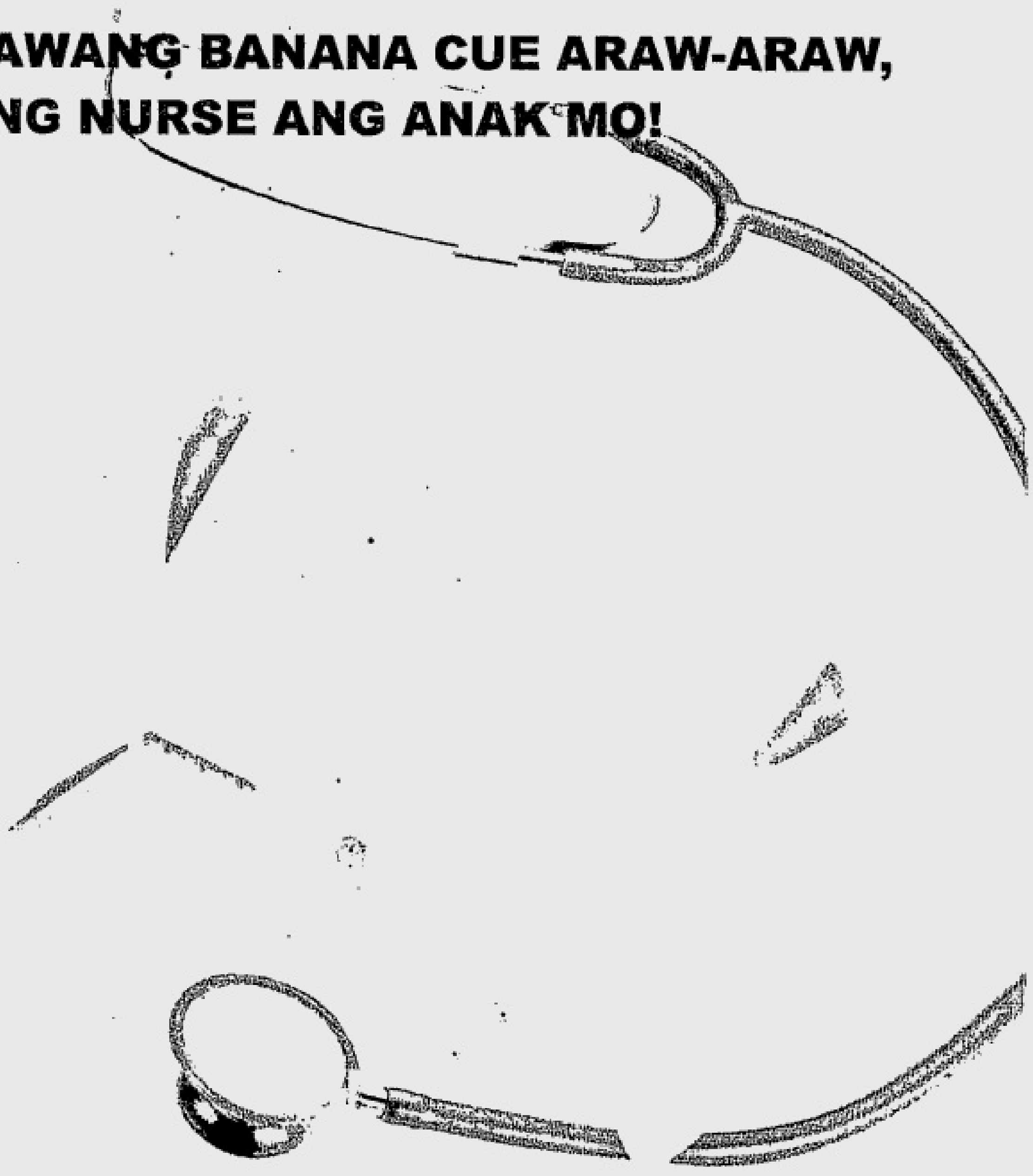

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IN SEARCH OF FINANCIAL FREEDOM

World Class Financial paves the road to financial independence

IT'S a dream shared by all Filipinos: the dream of financial freedom. For years, Filipinos have struggled to liberate themselves from the shackles of financial trap. For some it is a vision of material prosperity, for others an ideal compensation benefit. Some see it as a living reality, others as a promise still to be fulfilled. However, while everybody shares the dream, not everyone lives long enough to realize it.

For one, the country's record level of indebtedness, dangerously balanced against a low level of savings, and Filipinos' failure to save for retirement, never cease to hit the headlines. Millions of us face poverty in old age and many have lost confidence in savings after the sickly performance of some with profit funds.

Moreover, the quest for financial stability seems to be a never-ending saga with the failure of Social Security and corporate pension benefits to provide ample income for those in retirement age. How much can you expect to receive from Social Security when you retire? Just how long will Social Security be able to pay its obligations? Will it be there for you when you retire?

If the current scenario doesn't take an upward turn, research shows that the local SSS will be bankrupt by year 2015 unless contributions are increased. While only 30 percent of big corporations have pension benefits, many Filipinos have lost faith in personal savings since they don't normally accumulate enough profits due to low interest rates.

Getting Out of the Financial Trap

Everyone has a different image of financial freedom. Maybe it means having enough money to spend your days traveling across the globe. Or maybe it's choosing to work only when you feel like it.

For most Filipinos, financial freedom is waking up in the morning, enjoying the taste and aroma of freshly brewed coffee, and thinking about what you'd like to do -- whether it's shopping in high-end stores or playing several rounds of golf all day. This is possible because, in this scenario, whatever you do will be just fine, since you have the time and the money.

Sounds good. Yet, considering the figures, getting to that point would be quite a feat for most Filipinos: The Philippines has the lowest savings rate in Asia measuring only at 19 percent. In fact, 90 percent of Filipinos DO NOT have savings and 90 percent are in debt. Studies also indicate that Filipino consumers are facing a debt trap amounting to a staggering US$1.3 trillion, 40 percent of which is in credit cards.

WORLD/ B23

New company to provide . . .

From page B21

ates and the sale of the various products we carry," says Dizon.

Dizon adds that since WCF carries a diversified portfolio of products, they believe they can very well compete in the market in terms of recruiting sales people and in selling the products. "We will have a big network of sales associates, physical presence through our business centers, and the widest array of great products to meet the client's needs," boasts Dizon.

In the coming years, we plan to develop a big sales force of about 50,000 over the next five years and to establish a strong physical presence in the market by putting up WCF Business Centers in Metro Manila and in key cities in the Philippines to be able to reach as many people as possible in order to share the business opportunity with people looking for opportunity to have a second income business or to augment or diversify their income, and to promote the financial products to the big and growing market. We expect to contribute substantially to the new business of our product providers.

How to become a member

Any person can become a WCF member associate by attending a Business Opportunity Meeting held everyday at WCF's Business Centers where he will learn the business. He has to pay a one-time accreditation fee which entitles him to represent the product providers of his choice. He can attend all WCF training and product seminars conducted by the product providers for free and as often as he wants until he has attained full mastery of the subject and the products. He does not have to learn all the products. He can select the products he wants to specialize in. As a requirement, he has to purchase a pension plan or a health care plan called joining plan. "Since he will go out and convince other people to save through the various financial products, the associate has to set a good example by acquiring one for himself. As a member also, he can invite other people and build a sales group or just sell the products to his clients," Dizon says.

Training for members

WCF has many training programs for its members. First is the Business Opportunity Seminar where he will learn "the what" of the business then the Business Orientation Program to know "the how" of the business. Weekly general trainings are also conducted for members on varied subjects relating to the business. Adds Dizon, "We also schedule product training seminars conducted by our product providers about their products. Our members are also taught presentation skills, and foundation for leadership training for our business builders. We have also tied up with Organizational Change Consultants Inc (OCCI) in setting up what we call WCF Academy where many of the training seminars are conducted."

'NYLife allies with Insurance Stalwart'

NEW YORK Life Insurance (Philippines), Inc, the local subsidiary of New York Life International, Inc, the overseas arm of New York Life Insurance Co, one of the world's largest life insurers, has recently established an alliance with one of the stalwarts in the Philippine pre-need industry.

World Class Financial (WCF) was recently put up by a group of "patriotic crusaders" of the financial services industry whose goal is to satisfy the financial needs of the earning public, and educate people on financial literacy. Led by pre-need stalwart, president and CEO, lawyer Eliseo Dizon Jr., WCF promises to recruit and train a competent sales force of 50,000 strong nationwide within a period of three to five years. World Class Financial shall form part of New York Life's alternative distribution channel.

Eliseo Dizon Jr. was formerly president and CEO of Philam Plans, leaving behind 28 Billion Pesos in assets and earning from a mere 3 million Pesos start up capital back when it started fourteen years ago. He received a significant number of awards for his leadership and pioneering work in the pre-need sector from civic and education institutions. Dizon's rags-to-riches success story had inspired many professionals both from within and outside the insurance and financial sectors.

Dizon adds "Without advertising, they come to us...already last month, we have signed up six hundred agents to push for New York Life products in the market." He cites the dedication New York Life representatives show as an ingredient of success, "Of course, New York life has a very good representative who always makes it a point to be very visible. Agents would like the providers to always be around. They ask questions; they want to be satisfied; they ask for materials; they ask for training and she's (NYLIP representative) always around."

According to WCF agents, New York Life insurance products are uncomplicated and easy to carry, and they are very excited about the products. "It's good. Our agents are excited about it and they believe that it will sell. In fact, some of them even bought the product," according to Dizon.

Upon the invitation of George B. May, president and CEO of New York Life Insurance (Philippines) Inc, Dizon and WCF accepted the challenge of being one of the alternative channels of distribution for New York Life insurance products. At present, Dizon sees the alliance with NYLIP as a strong one. "We see them as partner in the business because they provide us with support, materials and enough incentives. Our agents will definitely promote their products which are not hard to sell." In the future, if all goes well, Dizon sees New York Life capturing a sizable chunk of the market, and pretty soon, NYLIP products would soon be at the top of people's minds.

With more than three decades of experience in the pre-need business under his belt, Dizon states confidently, "We have the advantage...We will grow together and provide Filipino families with appropriate solutions for their future."

> According to WCF agents, New York Life insurance products are uncomplicated and easy to carry

World Class Financial Paves the Road to Financial Independence

From page B22

In terms of financial security, the average Filipino of retiring age would not have much savings to sustain him for the rest of his life. By the age of 65, 95 percent of Filipinos are dead broke and are dependent on relatives or charity, with only 4 percent being financially independent and only 1 percent are truly wealthy. Of the 1 percent, more than 75 percent are business owners.

With these figures, is there any hope left for the Filipino dream of financial independence?

World Class Financial : Making Dreams Come True

In realizing one's dream of financial freedom, clearly, a living wage is still essential. Too many Filipinos still have trouble affording what they need or would like to have. But being able to afford food, shelter and a little luxury is merely a baseline requirement. Most people, including those on the lowest rungs, have a bigger vision, and it isn't the chance to get rich. They have a bigger vision: the pursuit of happiness. The dream is to reap intrinsic rewards from our work rather than merely be compensated for the time and effort we put in.

Sometimes, dreams need a little help coming true. World Class Financial (WCF), an independent marketing company engaged in the promotion of financial products and services, offers Filipino consumers the blueprint for financial freedom. It is a business enterprise created to provide a secondary income for people who would like to achieve financial stability and prosperity. A one-stop shop for financial products and services, WCF is backed by a network of world-class product providers --- giving WCF the advantage of having the widest portfolio of financial products designed to meet the future financial needs of its clients.

Launching a Revolution in the Finance and Investment Industry

While most Filipinos are familiar with the presence of pre-need companies that utilize network marketing, only a handful are aware that the products available in these companies are quite limited. What makes WCF a revolutionary idea is that it is the first independent marketing company that offers a diversified portfolio of financial products and services. Aside from its range of financial product offerings, trained associates are on hand to counsel clients on financial planning and investments.

Moreover, WCF has probably the most rewarding compensation system in the industry. Aside from generous commissions, sales associates are rewarded with incentives, bonuses and generation overrides while they're working at their own pace. Designed to provide a lucrative second income for its sales associates, WCF also provides its associates the training and tools required to succeed in the business. Members are allowed the opportunity to organize a business for themselves which they can leave as a legacy to their children.

Through its business opportunities, WCF aims to create financially stable families and eventually alleviate poverty. Its program on financial education is geared towards developing a culture of savings --- a discipline vital in the country's capital formation.

Great Minds and a Wealth of Experience

The management team behind WCF is a selection of some of the best minds in the finance and investment industry whose combined experience spans more than 50 years. It derives its strengths from the various disciplines and expertise alive in its members. Together, --- minds, expertise and discipline --- properly synergized, they are properly equipped with the tools in making the Filipino dream a reality.

Solid Partnerships with Global and Local Giants

As a marketing and distribution arm, WCF has forged partnerships with the most respected and prestigious financial institutions locally and globally. Its business partners include Asia United Insurance, Caritas Health Shield, Mapfre Asian Insurance Corporation, MAA Insurance Corporation, New York Life Insurance (Phils) Inc, PhilamLife & General Insurance, Philam Asset Management, Philam Insurance Company, PhilamPlans Inc, PhilamCare Health Systems, Philippine AXA Life, Philippine Charter Assurance Corporation, Pioneer Intercontinental Assurance Corporation, Premier Insurance & Surety Company, Pru Life of UK, Standard Chartered Bank, and Sun Life Assets Management, Inc. To continuously expand its product portfolio, WCF is currently negotiating with other established product providers.

Congratulations and Best Wishes to
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Business Features Editor Margie Quimpo-Espino

CELEBRITY ENDORSER NOT ENOUGH

Goods and services need more than stars

By Marge C. Enriquez

THE LOCAL garment scene is largely driven by image and celebrity endorsement. But Golden ABC Inc., makers of the youth-oriented Penshoppe, the adult line Penshoppe Ladies, the alternative label Oxygen and the new career line Memo, knows that more than the star luster, it's what you wear on your back that counts. CEO Bernard Liu maintains that it's the merchandise, the efficiency of the store operations and, in sum, the way the brands are managed, that bring in the business.

"We keep ourselves grounded. At the end of the day, you may have a good brand name but do the customers see something they'd like to buy? Do they like the store's service?" says Liu. "Yes, hype is important but you have to be able to support it. If people come to the store and they are disappointed, you could lose them forever. The real battle is won inside the stores."

The company's business is on the upswing. This is attributed to improving the quality of its products—better fabrics and designs, a more efficient management organization, operations and strategies. The company is also the first retailer to use an advanced German software for its Information Technology system. With the expansion, each label now has brand managers to focus on building the product.

"The importance is the balance between the internal and external process," says Liu.

BERNARD Liu, with Vince Hizon and Patricia Bermudez at the opening of its new shop which caters to young working people.

Atlhough the management prefers to keep mum about statistics, Albert Ong, SVP for marketing and marketing manager, says that Penshoppe alone has been experiencing double-digit growth. Liu adds, "Mandy Moore gave Penshoppe an international flavor. Any foreign star brings credibility, and the Filipino youth was able to see her in flesh and blood."

Liu admits that although the Hollywood singer-actress boosted its image, it did not easily translate to quick sales. Based on its customer feedback, the merchandise did not always meet the market's expectations.

Create a need

"It's normal that when there's a celebrity endorser, there's the surge of awareness and you created a need. The question is, can the interest be sustained? This will come from the internal processes. You may have good marketing campaign, but there if are no stocks, not the right product mix, the right talents are not in place, the service is bad, the support system is bad, you cannot collect the data on time, you don't know what is selling. then customers will not come back. If that happens, then all your investments will have gone to waste," he says.

"In the past 12 months, we have been doing work from these areas which people don't see so that when they see our product, they will like it. When they like it, it's available to them."

GOODS/ B2-2

Media firms see growth in ad spending

NEW YORK/LONDON—Media companies said they expect global advertising spending to rise next year due to an improved economy and events such as the Olympics, but that Europe's growth would lag.

Zenith Optimedia, a unit of France's Publicis, said 2004 global ad spending on major media would grow 4.7 percent. Universal McCann, part of New York-based Interpublic, said it expected growth of 5.8 percent.

Those growth forecasts are a welcome change for the advertising sector, which only this year began to emerge from a multi-year slump. Media companies have suffered job cuts and depressed stock prices due to stagnant ad sales.

Viacom president Mel Karmazin said at the UBS Media Week conference in New York that if Zenith Optimedia and McCann's advertising forecasts were accurate, "then I think you're going to see us early in '04 revising our numbers upward. We feel they may be right this time around."

US ad spending is expected to benefit from the presidential election, due to purchase of air time by candidates, political parties and interest groups. The Olympics, and a resurgence in online ad spending, will also boost the US ad market.

Zenith chief executive John Perriss said that besides the Olympics and the US elections, which are each expected to add some $1 billion worth of mostly TV advertising, business spending was key.

"The main growth driver in 2004 is corporate confidence rather than consumer confidence," said Perriss. "Consumer confidence never went away."

Zenith said ad spending would increase 5 percent in the US and 5.1 percent in Asia. European ad spending, however, is expected to recover more slowly, with a projected 3.7 percent increase.

McCann's Robert Coen, whose forecasts tend to be slightly more optimistic than Zenith's, agreed that Europe would lag the United States in ad spending growth in 2004, with the United Kingdom posting a 5.5 percent rise, ahead of projected 2.5-3.5 percent increases in Germany, France, Italy and Spain.

He expects US advertising to grow 6.9 percent next year to $266.4 billion from a 5.2 percent increase to $249.2 billion in 2003. That was higher than his June forecast.

Paul Richardson, chief financial officer at British ad conglomerate WPP Group, said he expected 2 percent to 4 percent growth in industry ad revenues, excluding currency effects and the effect of newly acquired businesses.

"I think there is growing business confidence," Richardson said at a Credit Suisse First Boston media conference in New York.

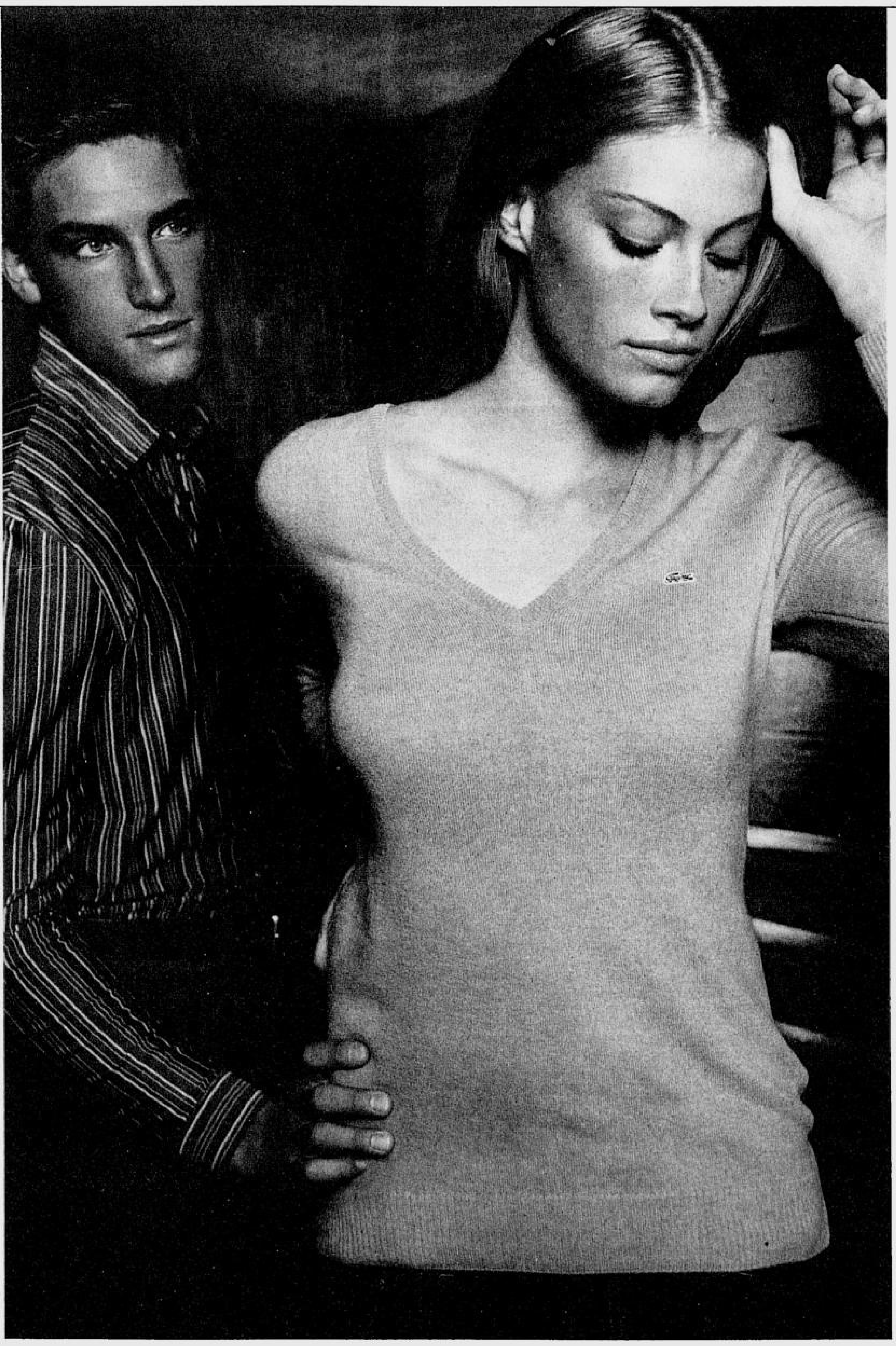
Big year for TV?

Coen predicted that cable TV and the top four broadcast networks would see the strongest growth in 2004 at about 12 percent, with Internet advertising a close second at 10 percent.

David Poltrack, CBS executive vice president of research and planning, said he expects a 10-percent gain in broadcast network advertising revenue in 2004.

However, prominent media buyers like Bill Cella of Interpublic's Magna Global and Jon Mandel of Grey Global Group's MediaCom said that advertisers could be chased away from buying increasingly expensive television air time.

Everything from the use of digital video recorders, which allow television watchers to zip through commercials, to a lower number of young male viewers in recent months than advertisers had hoped for, have called TV ad prices into question. *Reuters*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Just do IT

TAX-FILES

By Rodolfo Arvin D. Agbayani
SGV & Co.

THE GOVERNMENT considers information and communications technology (ICT) as one of its priority areas for investment promotion.

Toward this goal, fiscal and non-fiscal incentives are offered to ICT-related investments. To take advantage of these incentives, ICT-related enterprises should first be registered with the Board of Investments (BOI) or the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza).

BOI incentives

Under BOI guidelines, the following projects offering services both in the domestic and international market are eligible for BOI registration:

- IT services
- IT-enabled services
- ICT support activities

IT services include activities such as IT project management, applications systems development, applications services providers, web development management, database design and development, computer networking and data communications, software development (system software, middleware, application software) and ICT facilities operations/management.

IT-enabled services refer to business lines that can be transformed through information technology. These include activities such as business process outsourcing and shared services, engineering and design, animation and content creation, knowledge management, remote education, market research, travel services, finance and accounting services, human resource services and other administrative services (e.g. purchasing).

ICT support activities cover activities such as research and development of high value-added ICT products and services, education and manpower development in ICT, incubation of IT service providers, provision of Internet services and community access.

All BOI-registered enterprises engaged in eligible IT-related projects are entitled to the following incentives:

- Income tax holiday for six years from commercial operations of pioneer enterprises and four years for non-pioneering, with possible extension of two years but not to exceed eight years. A bonus year may be granted in the following cases:

1. The ratio of total imported and domestic capital equipment to the number of workers for the project does not exceed $10,000 to one worker; or
2. The net foreign exchange savings or earnings amount to at least $50,000 annually during the first three years of operation

- Employment of foreign nationals under Article 39(h) of Executive Order No. 226 [Omnibus Investments Code of 1987, as amended]
- Additional deduction on labor expense
- Unrestricted use of consigned equipment

If the registered projects are located in a less developed area as identified in the Investment Priorities Plan, the enterprise will be granted pioneer incentives.

Peza incentives

Like the BOI, the Peza also encourages and supports investments in IT enterprises. In fact, the Peza promotes the establishment and operation of IT parks/buildings to serve as suitable locations for the operations of IT enterprises.

This is ultimately aimed at accelerating the growth and development of the Philippine IT sector.

Under the Peza guidelines, the IT services that may be registered, and as such, entitled to incentives include:

- Software development and application, including programming and adaptation of system software and middleware, for business, media, e-commerce, education, entertainment, etc.
- IT-enabled services, encompassing call centers, data encoding, transcribing and processing; directories; etc.
- Content development for multi-media or Internet purposes
- Knowledge-based and computer-enabled support services, including engineering and architectural design services, consultancies, etc.
- Business process outsourcing using e-commerce
- IT research and development and
- Other IT-related service activities, as may be identified and approved by the Peza board.

IT is defined under Peza regulations as the collective term for the various technologies involved in processing and transmitting information, which include computing, multimedia, telecommunications, microelectronics and their interdependencies.

An IT enterprise operating any of the listed IT service activities may register with Peza for incentives provided it physically locates inside a Peza-registered IT park, building or special economic zone, which is covered by the required presidential proclamation.

An IT park is an area which has been developed into a complex capable of providing infrastructure and other support facilities required by IT enterprises, as well as amenities required by professionals and workers involved in IT enterprises, or easy access to such amenities.

Similarly, an IT building is a building, the whole or part of which has been developed to provide infrastructure and other support facilities required by IT enterprises and which may also provide amenities required by professionals and workers involved in IT enterprises, or easy access to such amenities.

Peza grants the following incentives to registered IT enterprises:

- Income tax holiday (ITH) for four years for non-pioneer IT enterprises, or six years for pioneer IT enterprises
- After the ITH period, the option to pay a special 5-percent tax on gross income earned, in lieu of all national and local taxes, except real property taxes on land owned by developers
- Exemption from payment of import duties and taxes on imported machinery and equipment and raw materials
- Additional deduction equivalent to 50 percent of training expenses, chargeable against the 3-percent share of the national government in the special 5-percent tax on gross income
- Permanent resident status for foreign investors with initial investments of $150,000 or more
- Employment of non-resident aliens required in the operation of IT Enterprises
- Other incentives, as may be determined by the Peza board

These incentives, coupled with the availability of a highly skilled and highly literate, English-speaking Filipino workforce, make investment in the ICT business in the Philippines a very attractive one.

DELEGATES try sending and receiving emails via wireless fidelity.

Get the job done even out of office

THE 18TH Philippine Advertising Congress recently wrapped up in Baguio City with about 3,000 delegates sitting through four days of discussing "the big idea" in advertising and marketing while spending nights attending dinners with star-studded entertainment and raffle draws.

To any top executive, that is too many days out of the office to meet the demands of a high paying job. Some would even consider attending the congress as a waste of precious time.

In this year's Ad Congress, BayanTel provided Internet connection via wireless fidelity (Wi-Fi) technology for free use of delegates and exhibitors so they can easily check and send important e-mails or retrieve urgent documents from the Internet.

Wi-Fi refers to a high-frequency wireless local area network that eliminates the need for a telephone line to connect to the Internet. The wireless connection extends only to a limited range covered by the Wi-Fi network. The technology was developed to suit the mobile lifestyle so that whether on the road, a hotel, or a convention center, one can connect to the Internet at speeds of up to 100 times faster than traditional dial-up services.

At the Ad Congress, delegates and guests had their laptops configured at the BayanTel Wi-Fi lounge to get Internet connection. The lounge also provided laptops with wireless Internet connection for free use of the delegates.

Setting up an enterprise level Wi-Fi network requires an Internet backbone like a leased line or digital subscriber line (DSL) provided by a telco like BayanTel. The Internet set-up also includes hardware such as routers, servers and access points.

To connect to the network, a computer requires a wireless local area network (LAN) card that costs between P3,000 to P5,000 on the average.

In Metro Manila, the airport, selected buildings and malls, and leading coffee shops have already been identified as Wi-Fi "hot spots." In these Wi-Fi "hot spots," users are required to pay a reasonable one-time access charge when connecting to the Wi-Fi network. Other hot spots offer free access and free use of LAN cards. Once out of range from the "hot spots," the Internet connection is automatically cut off.

Michael Cervantes, BayanTel vice president for corporate communications, said that this is the first time that Wi-Fi technology is made available to the Ad Congress. He also believes the Ad Congress Wi-Fi network covering the Camp John Hay Convention Center and Manor could be considered as one of the widest coverage ever installed in the country.

"The Wi-Fi service offered a more convenient and faster connection to the Internet. More than 100 users in the Ad Congress who were given access to the network said they were highly satisfied with the ease and speed of connection. It also proved that while the Ad Congress is perceived as an occasion solely for socializing, one can get the job done while soaking up in the party atmosphere."

According to Cervantes, the BayanTel Wi-Fi service further established the company's niche as a reliable provider of data and Internet services.

"With our success in the Ad Congress, mall operators, companies and organizers of other major conventions should consider BayanTel as their provider for wireless Internet connection."

Couple retires early to make angels

By Michael B. Jaucian
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

CAMALIG, Albay—Former bank employee Arnesto Agunday, 54, and wife Vivinia, 50, who used to work with a gas company, opted to retire early and with their separation pay, put up a business making angels and other Christmas decorative items using "sinamay."

They used to make angels out of abaca as a hobby. But when a friend of Vivinia visited their place at Barangay Libod in this town on Christmas Eve in 1985, she noticed that the angels made the Agunday's Christmas tree more festive.

Impressed by the effect, Vivinia's friend asked her to make her some angels so that she could also decorate her Christmas tree at home.

It so happened that the friend had plenty of connections and soon, news of the angels as attractive Christmas decors spread like wings and orders started to come, Arnesto says.

Unique

The Agundays claim that their angels are the most unique and sought-after Christmas decor in the market. With its simple design and make—using only galvanized iron wire, glue and indigenous fiber material—the angel Christmas decors has easily penetrated the local market.

Vivinia says that aside from the simple but colorful design of the product, buyers come because the angels are very affordable.

The smallest angel costs only P2.50, an ordinary angel is sold for P12 while the angels with design cost P30 to P40.

According to Agunday, the same angels sell for three times as much in department stores, yet are still patronized.

"What makes it saleable to customers is the popular belief that angels can do miracles for them," she adds.

Aside from angels, the couple also makes colorful Christmas trees, Christmas gift boxes, bells, lanterns and Christmas ribbons—all made of abaca fiber woven into sinamay.

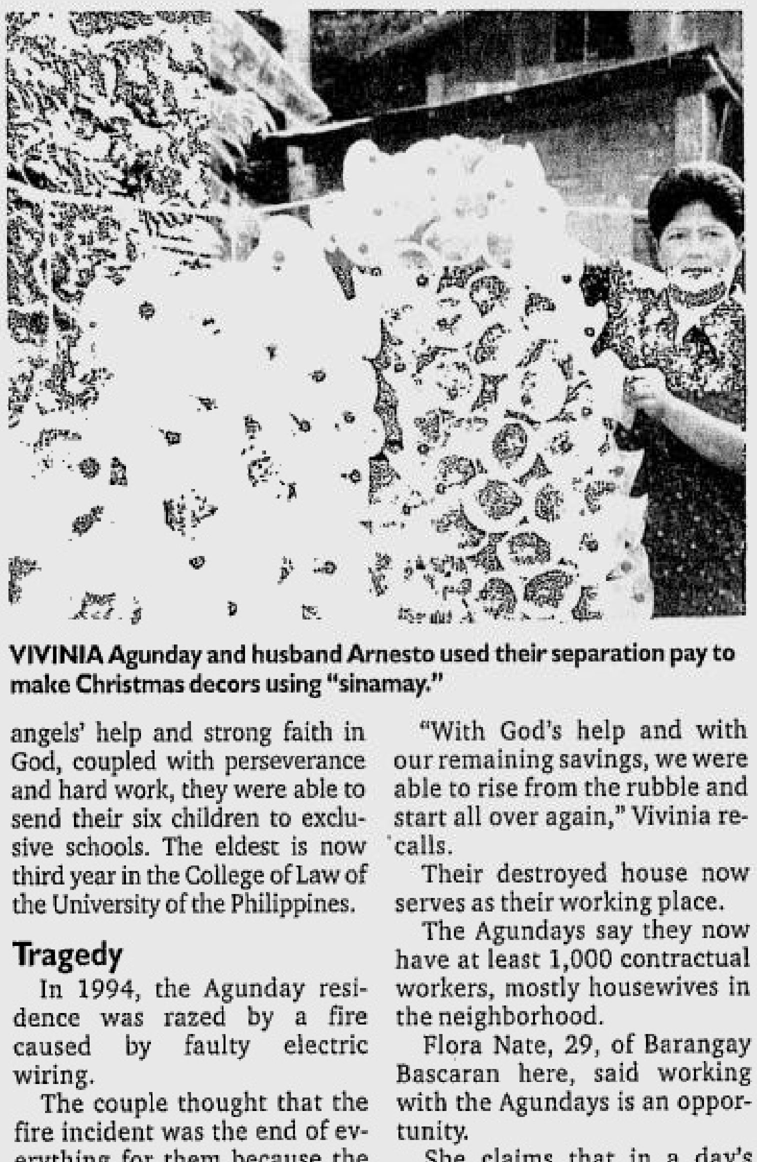
The couple says their products have reached markets in the United States, Canada, Europe and other Asian countries. Handicraft exporters in Legazpi City and Metro Manila have also been ordering from them.

Inspiration

Asked why they have chosen angels as their main Christmas decorative product, the couple says angels serve as their inspiration and protector, and the angels, as a product, has made their life easy.

"When we engaged in angel making, everything has changed for the better," Vivinia claims.

The couple says that with the angels' help and strong faith in God, coupled with perseverance and hard work, they were able to send their six children to exclusive schools. The eldest is now third year in the College of Law of the University of the Philippines.



VIVINIA Agunday and husband Arnesto used their separation pay to make Christmas decors using "sinamay."

Tragedy

In 1994, the Agunday residence was razed by a fire caused by faulty electric wiring.

The couple thought that the fire incident was the end of everything for them because the fire destroyed their property, their finished products and the fiber materials.

"With God's help and with our remaining savings, we were able to rise from the rubble and start all over again," Vivinia recalls.

Their destroyed house now serves as their working place.

The Agundays say they now have at least 1,000 contractual workers, mostly housewives in the neighborhood.

Flora Nate, 29, of Barangay Bascaran here, said working with the Agundays is an opportunity.

She claims that in a day's work, she earns at least P200 to P300, depending on how many angels she makes.

Should you or shouldn't you eat eggs?

AT HEALTHY Options, the learning never ends for the female front-liners of Asia's Number One Natural Products Store.

The irony of information today is that the more abundant and accessible it is, the more confused we've become. Take health, an issue that continues to evolve and thus contradicts its earlier findings. Are meat and carbohydrates good or bad for your body? Should you or shouldn't you eat eggs? And do herbal supplements help or harm your system? Dispense the wrong information or products and you might just do more damage than good permanently.

At Healthy Options, customer assistants (CAs) are trained to set the record straight on these and other pressing health issues through knowledge that is rooted in education and experience. Female college graduates, preferably with health-related degrees in science and nutrition, undergo an intensive week-long orientation conducted personally by Healthy Options managing director Romy Sia. The orientation includes an introduction into the world of Asia's Number One Natural Products Store, and the products found in its four main sections: vitamin, mineral and herbal supplements, dry goods, bodycare, and books. "Most importantly, we reinforce within them the vision of Healthy Options, which is to teach people how to take care of their health," says Sia. "It's a mindset and they've got to believe in it."

Regular written exams on health and other relevant issues like current events, politics, and general information sharpen the CA's mind and shape her into a well-rounded individual. After all, these females are the front-liners in a store that caters to highly intelligent people in the fields of business, government, sports and show business. Meanwhile, a monthly product allowance, given along with

SHOULD/B2-3

Goods and services need more than stars

From page B2-1

The company also combines gut feel with science. "Intuition comes from seeing opportunities which we validate with research. Relying on intuition alone can be very costly because you can commit mistakes, and you have to correct them," says Liu.

Gigi Tibi, Penshoppe's marketing director adds, "While we understand our market, we have to know them inside out."

Liu says Moore's endorsement has finally been paying off, coupled with more eye-candy styles and improved store services. The underwear line has ben growing by 60 percent, just by word of mouth. Even Penshoppe Ladies, has been attracting young adults who graduated from Penshoppe.

Oxgyen, a brand which was inspired by the look of rave parties and street fashion, has been transformed into gimmick wear. After downsizing the number of stores in half, the volume of sales did not decrease. On the contrary, the business has been picking up. Oxygen's underwear line which was launched in 2001 got a major revamp. Customers complained about the assembly and fabric. After improving its product concept, the underwear has been experiencing double-digit growth.

Memo, the latest addition, targets the professional who has a casual dress code attire. The look is a cross between a clean Italian style and Dockers but at a fraction of the price.

"We saw the opportunity to cater to successful men and women who don't need to dress up to work. There was no local retailer filling in that niche. The tagline is 'Memo is the New Workline,'" says Liu.

Memo started out in Filinvest Mall. Although there was no brand awareness, it started attracting repeat customers. It's touted as "the best kept secret." A P900 long-sleeved shirt looks like a high-end counterpart worth P2,000. With the new store in Glorietta 3, Memo has been attracting a lot of foot traffic.

More than the restructuring of the company, the bottom line of Golden ABC's success is literally a lot of prayers, a virtue which Liu always brings up in most interviews.

It has enabled the company to be level-headed especially in the face of competition. "In business, you have to be objective. The moment you start getting emotional over certain business decisions, you lose focus. Sometimes the heart dictates the actions more than the mind. It should be a combination of both."

Bank gives no collateral loan with twist

"MONEY anytime, anywhere, for whatever you need." That's what PSBank's new product, the Flexi Credit Line (FCL), promises to offer.

At the launch, PSBank top officials presented the many uses of FCL, its wide benefits, how it may be availed and who are qualified to get it.

"We are quite proud of introducing to you this new product, which is the first in the industry," said PSBank president Pascual M. Garcia III during the product launching. "It signals the fact the PSBank is making very serious efforts to lead and to address the needs of the consumer market in the country. Furthermore, it reflects commitment to this market and our success in providing banking products and services that satisfy the needs of consumers, households and small businesses nationwide, " he added.

PSBank FCL is the first and only multi-purpose, no-collateral loan that gives borrowers easy access to cash via ATM and personal checkbook. It comes with a moneycard similar to an ATM card, which may be used in over 3,000 Bancnet and Megalink ATM machines nationwide for easy withdrawal of cash. It may likewise be used as a debit card to pay for groceries or shop at Bancnet-affiliated stores. The checkbook may be used for purchases that allow check payments.

According to Garcia, launching FCL is basically giving consumers a better choice. While most card companies today charge anywhere from 3.5 percent interest rate, PSBank, he said, charges a one and half percent interest rate less per month. This, he added, allows consumers to utilize a superior product at a lower cost.

Even better news is that the 2-percent interest rate will only be imposed once a customer avails of the credit line.

PSBank has so far, a total of 110 branches scattered from Laoag to Davao. The growing number of branches located in strategic regions in the country gives PSBank a good presence nationwide. Consumers, wherever they may be, are given an alternative loan product offering to improve their lifestyles.

"With the launching of Flexi Credit Line, this innovative product is destined to provide individuals nationwide with the opportunity of improving their lifestyles, having easy access to cash via credit facility anytime they need, whether it be for the tuition fee of the children, medical expenses, shopping, or whether it be to consolidate existing debts," explained Garcia.

"As the first bank to introduce this product, we believe that we are participating in an effort not only to address a need of the consumers that has not been filled before, but we are helping in providing more to everyone so that their own lifestyles, and the economy in general will improve," Garcia stressed.

With the launching of PSBank FCL and other innovative product offerings, Garcia hopes that PSBank will always be in the forefront in providing better products and services to banking clients nationwide. Also, in stepping up competition by coming up with a product like the FlexiCredit Line, PSBank, according to Garcia, is upbeat that in the end, it would be the consumers who will benefit.

Should you or shouldn't you eat eggs?

From page B2-2

above-average wages, serves two purposes: it keeps a customer assistant (CA) healthy, and it enables her to experience first-hand the effects of the company's specialized products. "That's why when a customer inquires about a particular product, our CA can look them straight in the eye and say, yes, I've tried it," explains Sia. "It's all about credibility. I really try to keep them on their toes," he adds. "So from the very beginning, I tell them, 'If you hate school and studying, and if you think that after college, there will be no more reading, then you're mistaken. At Healthy Options, the learning never ends.'"

Learning, of course, isn't the sole reward of this profession. As part of its 8th year anniversary celebration, Healthy Options mounted its first-ever Search for the Customer Assistant of the Year. Open to all CA's of Healthy Options' 10 branches, the search identifies the most efficient and effective CA based on skill, personality and interest.

The CA who amasses the most of Healthy Options regular customers' votes wins an all-expenses-paid, four-day, three-night trip for two to Hong Kong. But the biggest benefit a CA can expect from a job is the opportunity to influence people to put health at the top of their priorities list. Says Sia, "Years ago, people relied solely on what a doctor said and prescribed. Today, people have begun to take their personal health issues into their own hands. They're doing their own research by reading books and browsing the Internet. Our customers know more about health now than they did five years ago."

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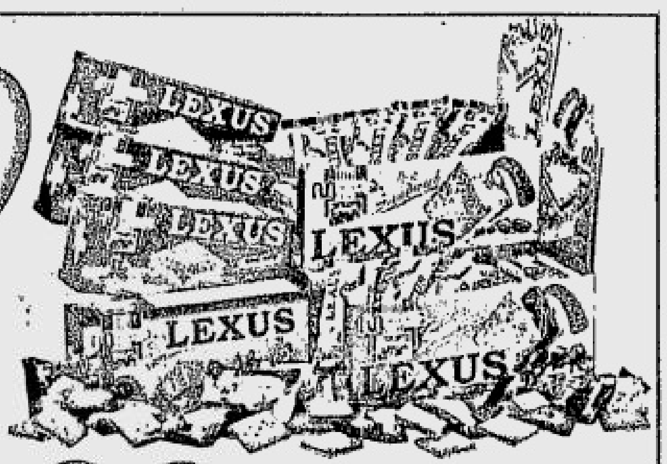

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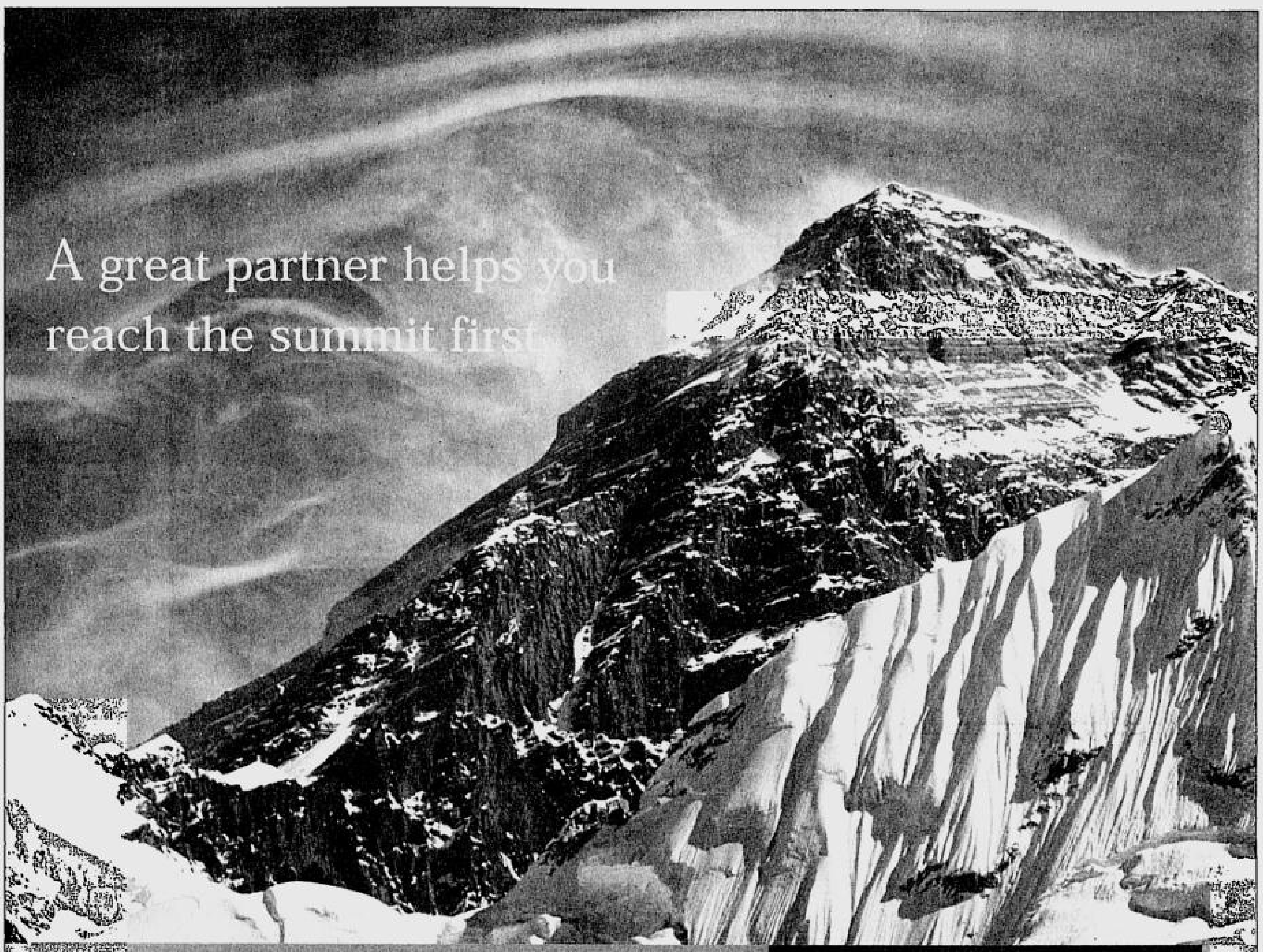

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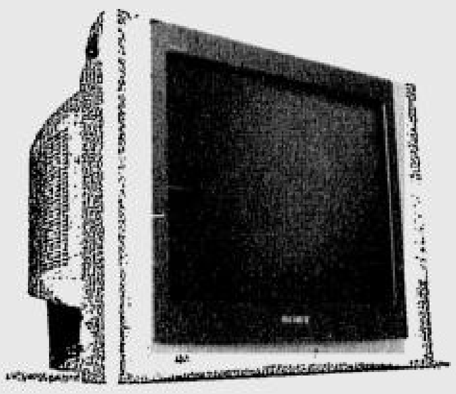

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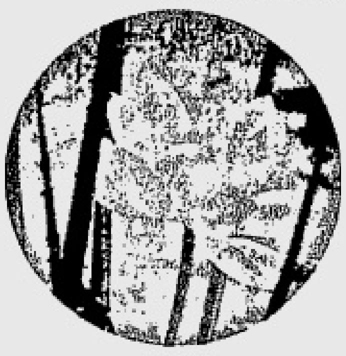
FORBESWOOD HEIGHTS
LUXURY GARDEN RESIDENCES
Come Home to Paradise.

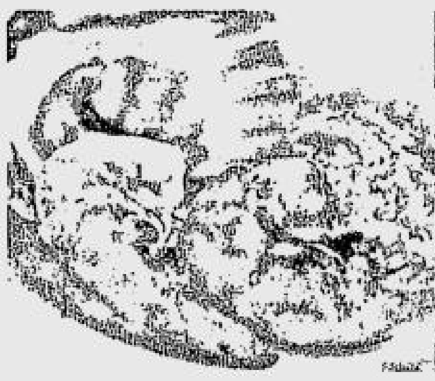
Forbeswood Heights
Your very own Paradise...

Emerging as one of the most coveted pieces of real estate in the country, Forbeswood Heights transforms home into a tropical getaway. Offering a paradise-like setting in the middle of the metropolis, this six-tower enclave achieves comfort and style through a balance of thoughtfully planned elements. For urban professionals based in the nearby Makati and even Ortigas central business districts, Forbeswood Heights offers exquisite residences combined with first-rate recreational amenities.



At Forbeswood Heights, today's urban pacesetters reward themselves with exclusive access to their own tropical paradise. This condominium project brings the outdoors indoors with its 5,500-square-meter central park, an extensive recreational area embraced by lush greenery. There is a swimming pool complex with a 25-meter-long lap pool, a free-form pool with in-water lounge and a children's wading pool with water slide. By the pool deck is an inviting sunbathing lounge.

From executive studios to one-bedroom suites that range from 36 to 59 square meters, Forbeswood Heights redefines the concept of owning a luxury home. Units can be joined to suit a client's space requirements. Rooms are airy and bright. The layout is luxurious yet uncomplicated. And with its affordable prices and flexible payment terms, one easily lays claim to an address and a lifestyle of exceptional prestige.



A multipurpose hall with a barbecue pit hosts a variety of functions. A fitness station, jogging path, tennis court and putting green provide challenging workouts. A playground enfolded by palm trees and landscaped gardens allows children to frolic to their hearts' content.

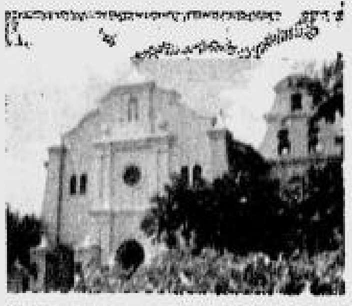
Beyond the gates lies Forbes Town Road, a leisure strip that echoes Singapore's Bugis Junction. With rows of cafés, restaurants, bars and specialty shops a few paces away, everyday celebrations are just waiting to happen.

...Nestled amid the best of a Global City

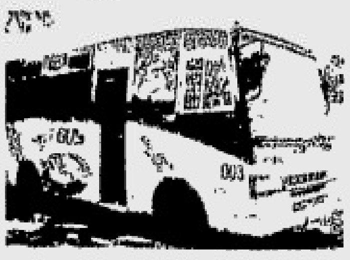
Forbeswood Heights lies within the Global City, a world-class business district, and is located right next to the country's foremost symbols of distinction: the Manila Golf and Country Club, the Manila Polo Club and the Forbes Park subdivision. This illustrious neighborhood, one of the city's main attractions, allows residents to live at the height of prominence.

Nearly half of the Global City's land is devoted to open space and greenery. Urban professionals, used to the sight of skyscrapers and cramped roads, will find this place a refreshing change. Also dotting this city of green are striking works of public art created by top Filipino artists such as Gerry Leonardo and Lor Calma.

Much of the Global City's infrastructure has been laid underground. Its world-class dual piping, power and LPG supply and fiber optic cabling systems ensure the utmost convenience for its residents. Its drainage detention center, the largest private drainage structure in Metro Manila, guarantees that the city remains flood-free during the rainy season.



Well-situated amenities within the city such as PriceSmart and MC Home Depot make the daily essentials readily available to residents. The British School Manila, the Manila Japanese School and the International School Manila offer the youth a privileged education. The upcoming St. Luke's Medical Center brings expert health care closer to home.



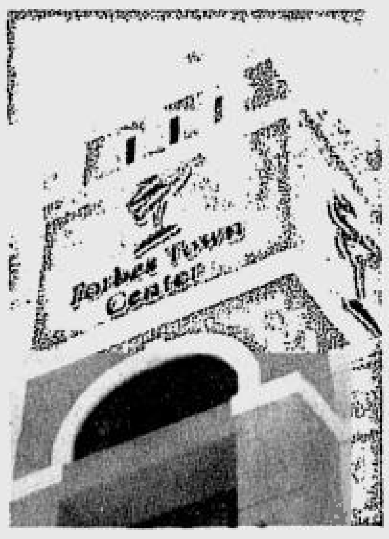
With the Global City's mass transport system, efficient road network and state-of-the-art traffic services, key destinations become easily accessible. The Makati and Ortigas CBDs can be reached effortlessly via the EDSA Kalayaan Flyover, the South Luzon Expressway and the Circumferential Road (C-5).

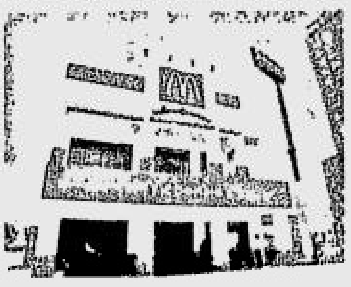
Transforming the Urban Landscape

Construction of the six-tower Forbeswood Heights kicked off with a concrete pouring ceremony attended by (from left) Bonifacio West Development Corporation director Kirk U. Young, president Charlie Rufino, vice chairman Jacques Dupasquier, Megaworld chair and president Andrew Tan, 19-1 Realty director Macario Rufino and Megaworld senior vice president Kingson Sian.

Forbeswood Heights has captured the imagination of urban professionals doing business or working in Makati and Ortigas. With its tropical-paradise allure and the modern conveniences afforded by its vantage location in the Global City, touted as the next most important CBD, the project promises a superior standard of living for its residents. To date, Forbeswood Heights has joined Megaworld's portfolio of fast-selling projects, with the Agoho, Bauhinia, Cambridge and Dorchester towers already sold out and Evergreen 60 percent sold.

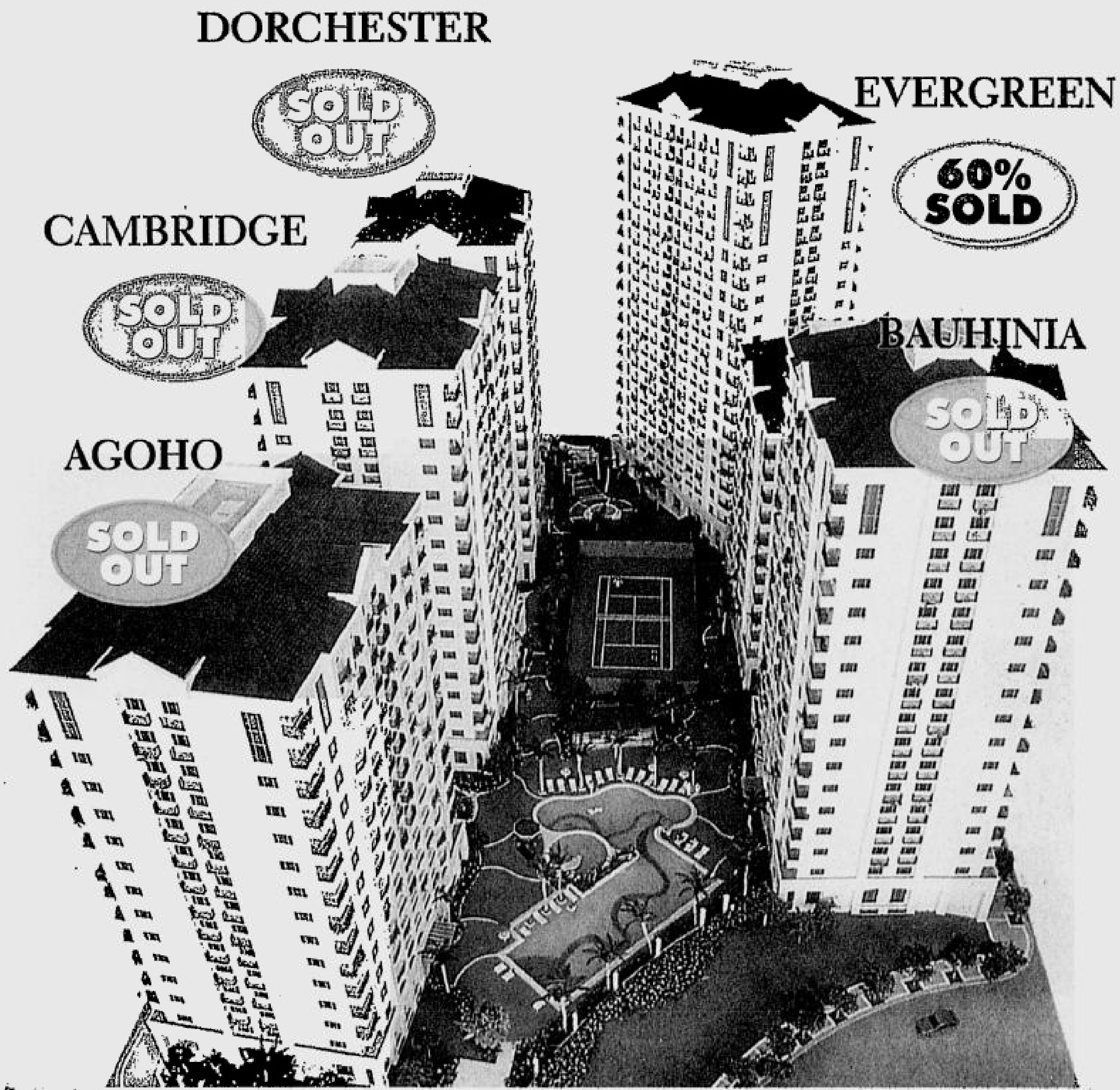
Joint venture partners Megaworld Corporation and Bonifacio West Development Corp. recently held a concrete pouring ceremony to mark the start of construction of the first and third towers (Agoho and Cambridge) of Forbeswood Heights. The two are scheduled for completion by 2006.





At the site bordering the Manila Golf and Country Club, an impressive three-story grand showroom offers visitors an intimate view of Forbeswood Heights and its community. Model units showcasing the best architectural and interior designs give clients a taste of the sumptuous lifestyle offered only at Forbeswood Heights. The showroom also features a UCC Café at the ground level, a thoughtful addition for visitors who want to unwind after touring the model units. A few steps away, McDonald's, the anchor establishment of Forbes Town Road, caters to people on the go.

Forbeswood Heights is an address for people who want to enjoy the comforts of home from a luxurious garden retreat in the middle of a world-class city. It is a valuable investment—one that enables customers to own the whole of paradise and not just a piece of it.



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Editor **Aries Espinosa**

Ad execs let their hair down at ABS-CBN Ad Congress bash

ADVERTISING and media unleashed their 'creative powers' when the two industries joined forces during the ABS-CBN's "Whatta Singkwenta!" after-dinner party held during the 18th Philippine Advertising Congress in Baguio City.

The fusion of performances from the said sectors sent an intensity of fun to the over 3,000 delegates of the Ad Congress who had a blast seeing the key personalities from advertising, jamming onstage with ABS-CBN stars, on one hot night at the CAP Convention Center in Camp John Hay.

The heat that night went fever-pitch when advertising titans like Yoly Ong of Campaigns and Grey, Gigi Garcia of Ace Saatchi, Susan Dimacali of McCann Erickson took centerstage and wowed the audience with their song numbers together with Charo Santos-Cóncio, the network's EVP and head for entertainment group.

MATEK Gargantiel, EVP Jimenez Basic Advertising; Madona Bueno of Unitel; Gigi Garcia, Saatchi and Saatchi VP of client service; Susan Dimacali, BBDO president; Menlou Bibonia, SMC VP; Mio Chongson, BBDO VP of client service.

Meanwhile, the retro medley of BBDO's David Guerrero, TBWA's Tong Puno, Unilab's Chi-Chi Barrios and Jun Vivar, Campaigns Advertising Boy Pangilinan, Image Advertising's Louie Morales and ABS-CBN's Nicanor Gabunda and Orly Galang also drew the crowd even wilder with their showbiz-like stage presence.

This was followed by a slew of dance presentations with Minda Lansang, president of Mindshare; Gigi Garcia, VP for client service of Saatchi and Saatchi Advertising; Susan Dimacali, president of BBDO Guerrero Ortega; Abel Seraon, general manager of Unitel Productions; Matek Gargantiel, EVP of Jimenez Basic; Madonna Bueno of Unitel; Menlou Bibonia, VP for corporate marketing of San Miguel Corp; and Mio Chiongson, VP for client service of BBDO Guerrero Ortega, winding up to the tune of "Mr. Suave."

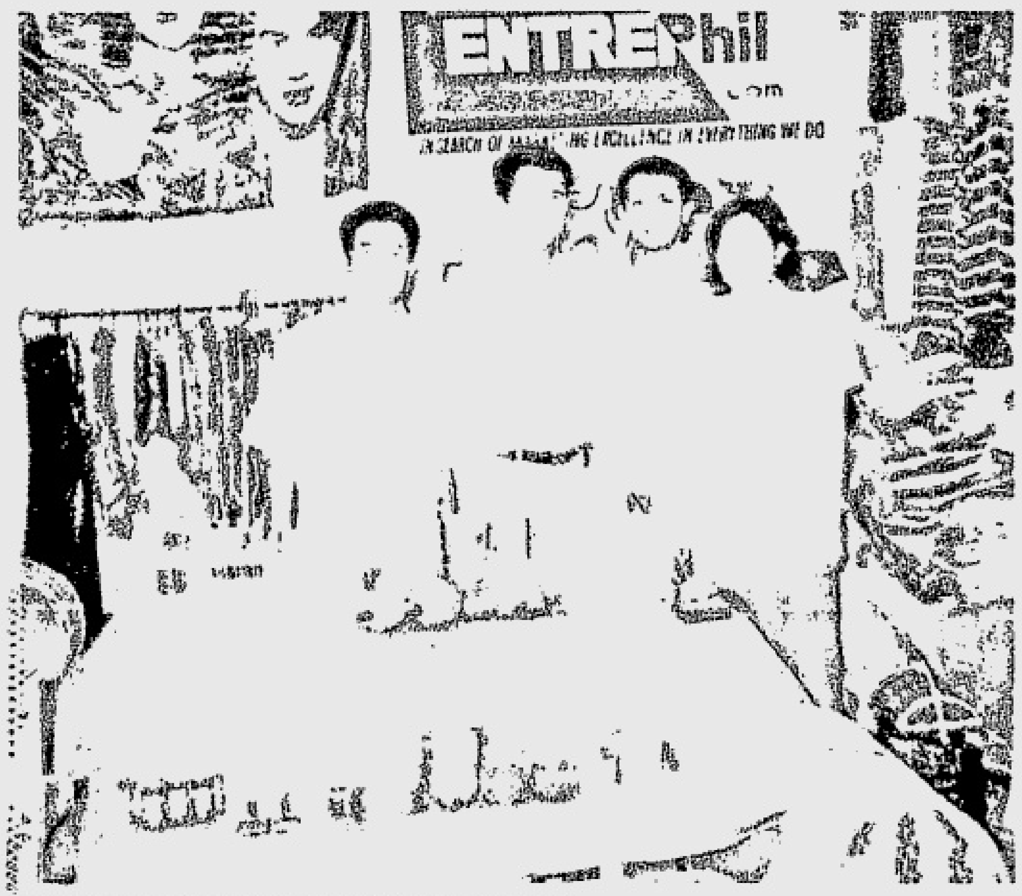
The program's concept was also a fitting tribute of the network to the advertising industry in celebration of its 50 years in television to recognize its significant contribution to the network's success. True to its Kapamilya theme, ABS-CBN tailored-fit the occasion to the people in the advertising sector, which it considers its kapamilya.

Toward the end of the program, the network's celebrities together with the advertising guest performers gave in to the clamor of the audience to dance "Otso-otso" and when called onstage, even ABS-CBN chair and CEO Eugenio "Gabby" Lopez III and president/COO Freddie Garcia joined the dancing of the phenomenal hit.

Whatta Singkwenta! was organized by ABS-CBN's integrated sales and marketing department, with the network's special project division headed by Chit Guerrero. Chair of ABS-CBN Ad Congress was Jose "Pitoy" Garcia, also the network's vice president for sales and marketing.

DAVID Guerrero, chair of BBDO; Boy Pangilinan, president of Campaigns Advertising; Nic Gabunda, SVP ABS-CBN sales and marketing.

JUN Vivar of Unilab; Orly Galang, ABS-CBN VP of sales; Tong Puno, TBWA president; Chi-Chi Barrios of Unilab.



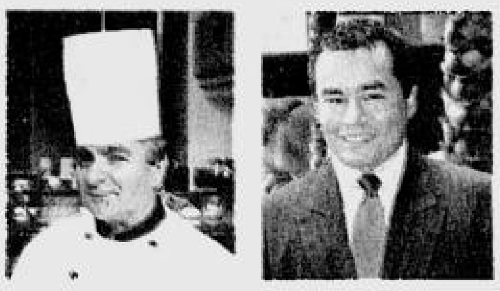
ENTREPhil
.com
IN SEARCH OF [illegible] THE EXCELLENCE IN EVERYTHING WE DO

NETREPINOYSHIP IS ALIVE AND WELL!

ENTREPHIL is an 'offline' business that literally sprang and blossomed in the Internet. Organized by Romy Miranda, Allan de Lima and Tess Marcelino in June 2003, it opened shop in MRT Ayala Station on Oct. 1. Today, EntrePhil is comprised of stakeholders who joined in from several Pinoy Internet business boards. Most of their suppliers are online sellers and consignors who place their fine merchandise at downright cheap prices. Shown tending the shop are officers Romy and Allan with two of their regular customers in one of their sale offerings. Another sale is due on Dec. 12, 13 and 14 and every weekend thereafter in their MRT Ayala Station shop. Next year, EntrePhil plans to set up the store in a mall, venture in food trade, outsourcing and other business concerns. Call Romy for inquiries at 823-6257 or text 0917-2449308.

Diamond Hotel's new executives

AS THE year 2003 comes to an end, the Manila Diamond Hotel looks forward to new beginnings for its food and beverage department. Joining the hotel are executive chef Raymund Braun and Fritz Weber as the new food and beverage manager.



RAYMUND Braun and Fritz Weber

Chef Braun brings with him his expertise culled from his local and international exposure to acclaimed hotel chains. He began his career in Arabella Hotel, Munich Germany as a Demi Chef entremetier in this 4-star hotel chain, and then moved to bigger challenges when he joined Bayrischer Hof, a 5-star hotel in Germany, as Chef de Partie Tournant.

Chef Braun has also made the rounds in Asia with the likes of White Swan Hotel in Guangzhou China, Swiss Club in Singapore, and Mactan Shangri-La in Cebu. A full-blooded German national, Chef Braun promises to introduce his country's specialties to the hotel.

Meanwhile, Weber is equally known within the industry for his stints in prominent hotels and restaurants such as the Giraffe Bar and Grille, Makati Skyline, New World Hotel, Shangri-La's Edsa Plaza Hotel and Hyatt Regency Manila.

Together, they will cook up new and exciting innovations to the restaurant and bar outlets of the Manila Diamond Hotel. For its ongoing promotions, call 528-3000.

PREMYO WOW SA ILAW RAFFLE DRAW

GE Lighting Philippines and Robinsons Handyman Inc recently held the grand raffle draw of the Premyo Wow sa Ilaw at the Robinsons Handyman Inc office in Libis, Quezon City. Shown, from left, are Alan G. dela Cruz, president, GE Lighting Philippines, Robina Gokongwei-Pe, senior vice president, Robinsons Handyman Inc, Jody Gadia, general manager, Robinsons Handyman Inc. and Joey Nuguid, manager-market development, GE Lighting Philippines.

'Balikbayan' treat at City Garden Hotel

A SPECIAL treat awaits returning overseas Filipinos, or balikbayans, at the City Garden Hotel Makati.

For only $49, balikbayans can have first-class accommodation in a single or twin room, inclusive of one-way transport to the airport.

"At the same time, they can have a family get-together or throw a party for 35 people for as low as P24,750+ inclusive of sumptuous food choices (buffet or grill), sound system, dance floor, 4-hour use of function room, slide projector and screen, complimentary one-time use of gym and swimming pool for four persons, and 30-percent discount at the hotel's Orient Day Spa," said general manager Johnny Rios.

Both the buffet and grill menus offer a wide and complete selection of mouth-watering exotic 4-course delights, with one complimentary dish of the guest's choice and free corkage on two bottles of wine as part of the party package.

"The balikbayans may stage the party at the hotel's function rooms, or at the Le Jardin Restaurant, or at the Roofdeck Bar & Grill with a Roman-inspired swimming pool and offers a magnificent view of the Makati skyline," Rios said.

On top of such luxurious amenities are 160 first-class, Italian-inspired rooms, all set and ready for the expected influx of balikbayans and tourists this Christmas season.

"In addition, City Garden Hotel-Makati has come up with various Christmas party packages for individual, family or corporate requirements," Rios added.

The Christmas party packages vary in price depending on the menu, but all cover a minimum of 70 persons and include such amenities as candle light with Christmas trimmings, in-house sound system, 25 track CD player/changer, VCD/VHS player, TV monitor, podium with microphone, and white chair cover.

The package price ranges from P45,500+ for Fiesta Filipino and Fisherman's Fare, to P47,950+ for Western Menu and P52,500+ for the City Garden Menu.

The Fiesta Filipino menu consists of favorite Filipino food like sinigang na tanguigue sa miso, kare-kare, inihaw na tadyang ng baboy, rellenong bangus, pancit sotanghon, leche flan or buko salad, and assorted native delicacies, to name a few.

The Fisherman's Fare highlights fresh catch like kinilaw na tanguigue, ginataang tambacol wrapped in pechay leaves, steamed blue crab, seafood paella, grilled squid or mussels or oysters, corn and carrots, red egg, tomato and onion salad, green mango with shrimp paste, tropical fruits, and assorted cakes, among many others.

The Western Menu covers assorted sausages and cold cuts, grilled beef ribs, roasted spring chicken with peppercorn sauce, grilled pork spareribs, pasta putanesca, corn on the cob, baked pork and beans, mini cheese cake, carrot cake, fresh fruit salad and fruit tarts, and many more.

On the other hand, the City Garden Menu features favorite food from around the world like sushi for appetizer, Greek salad with cream cheese, baked oyster Florentine, seafood thermidor, grilled beef and chicken sausage, pork, lamb, Mongolian barbecue (meat or seafood), and various fresh fruit cutlets, to name a few.

Reservations or inquiries can be made at 899-1111 or domestic toll free number 1-800-101-Garden (427336).

Known as Metro Manila's first Internet-ready hotel, City Garden is a businessman's hotel whose well-appointed rooms come for as low as P950+ on a twin-sharing basis.

The hotel is located at 7870 Makati Avenue in between Kalayaan and Durban streets.

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KID WONDER

4-year-old Andrea Coleen de Matta receives from Consolidated Industrial Gases Inc (CIGI) PGS operations general manager Yousuf Mirza (right) a gift for winning in the BOC Group's poster-making contest. The awarding ceremony was held during the CIGI-PGS Safety Day at its cryogenic plant in Apalit, Pampanga. De Matta, the eldest daughter of a CIGI employee, drew a sketch of a family shooing away the evils of safety hazards and accidents inside the home. Her work will be among the featured drawings in the BOC calendar for 2004. Hundreds of entries from around the world participate in the annual contest. Also shown are Coleen's parents and younger sister and CIGI-PGS general manager Manny Rubio.

Bits Clips

Help for hurting marriages

RETROUVAILLE, a French word for "rediscovery", is a Catholic healing ministry that offers hope to hurting couples who are struggling to stay together and separated couples who have a sincere desire to give their marriage a chance. The Retrouvaille program consists of a live-in weekend, from Friday evening to Sunday afternoon, and six follow-up sessions for healing to take place. The weekend presenters are composed of a Cathlic priest and three married couples who themselves have gone through conflict in their lives. On Dec. 12 to 14, Retrouvaille weekend will be held at the Saidi Formation House in Taktak Road, Antipolo City. For program inquiries, call Fr. Soc Mesiona at 524-2977, Tony and Cops at 435-3414, Merit and Bernie at 0917-7950682 or 742-5487, Willie and Aleth at 800-5902 or 801-2371 or Ike and Flor at 718-0689.

1st open golf tourney

THE ATENEO de San Pablo Alumni Foundation, Inc. will hold its 1st Open Golf Tournament on Dec. 12 at Mount Malarayat Golf and Country Club, Lipa City. The proceeds from the activity will be used in support of the foundation's monthly medical and dental mission chaired by director Apo Exconde and for the Free Legal Assistance headed by fiscal Gerry Ilagan. For more information call Tony Roño (049) 562-3793; Romy Robielos (049) 562-0773; Raffy Mendoza (049) 561-1258 and Mike Alcantara (02) 869-2382.

Star City's 'Pamaskong Aliwan'

NO FILIPINO Christmas can be complete without lights. Now, Christmas lighting is done on a grand scale. This season, Christmas lights will set the city ablaze as Star City, the country's premier family entertainment theme park at the Cultural Center of the Philippines Complex, in cooperation with the Manila Broadcasting Company, mounts "Pamaskong Aliwan", the grandest Christmas festival lights in history, slated from Dec. 11 to 13. The highlight of "Pamaskong Aliwan" will be a breathtaking parade of floats and street dancers on Dec. 13. The parade begins in front of the Manila Hotel and ends in front of the Star City fair ground. The participants will be vying for top prizes in the dance parade and float competitions. For more information, call the Pamaskong Aliwan secretariat at 832-6228 and 40.

Marriage encounter weekend

MARRIED couples interested in renewing their commitment and rediscovering more about each other are invited to join the Marriage Encounter weekend seminar from Dec. 12 to 14 at the Angels Hills Formation Center in Tagaytay City. The marriage encounter is by the All for Jesus (AJ) Marriage Encounter series under the spiritual guidance of Fr. Jess Fernandez SJ. AJ belongs to the Marriage Encounter Foundation Philippines, Tuklasan Sector. This seeks to rediscover, renew, enhance and invigorate the depth of mutual commitment among married Christians. Interested parties can call Bobby or Evelyn Lozano at 0916-4251289, Troy or Vina Inciong at 0916-6274256, Ricky or Marissa Manalo at 0920-9059697, and Bob or Cien Barbiran at 0917-3281421.

30 years of Nike basketball

NIKE and basketball-you can't speak of one without the other. For the last 30 years, Niek has been at the forefront of every major basketball footwear innovation. If you know basketball, you will remember the Blazer, the Bruin, the Franchise, Air Revolution, Air Jordan, Air Force One, Air Flight, Air Max Uptempo, and the Shox. Behind each shoe is a story of pure function, and beyond each story of function lies the story of dreams. What would you give to see them all again. All of them-the crown jewels of basketball-will be here for only two days. The Sole Provider Basketball Exhibit will be held on Dec. 12 and 13 from 10:30 a.m. to 8 p.m. at Cyberzone, 4th floor of SM Megamall Building B. It has never happened before, and most probably, will never happen again.

It's business as usual at Makati hotel

DESPITE a siege in July and a recent sensationalized event, it looks like Oakwood Premier Ayala Center, the luxury property in the heart of Makati will continue to be distinguished in the hotel industry as having one of the highest occupancy rates and yields. These days, it is registering occupancy levels in the '70s or better than the industry average. Among luxury properties in the financial district, it enjoyed one of the highest room occupancies and the highest yield prior to the one-day takeover by rebel soldiers in July and it just may continue to hold this distinction up to year end, according to senior executive Al Legaspi.

On a typical morning, its main restaurant is busy with foreign business executives, many of them scanning the news on CNN while having breakfast in tables for one. There is a sprinkling of expat wives and kids beginning the day with a good meal and occasional business groups that are already meeting even if its is still relatively quiet in the streets outside.

Legaspi attributes the return to normalcy to a concerted local and global effort to convince key audiences that security in the property always has and will continue to be a top priority. "There is really nothing you can do to prevent 300 armed men from taking over as they did last July 27," he says. "Our clients are convinced that our staff went beyond the call of duty to protect our guests and that we will hold guest safety and welfare as a paramount value. We feel affirmed by the countless number of commendation letters we have received from guests and corporate accounts alike," Legaspi adds.

Oakwood may also have been helped by the fact that no matter how skittish multinationals may be about a country's internal upheavals, organizations that already have investments here will do what they can to protect them and keep the expats coming.

Distinguished in the hospitality industry before the July caper for its high rate of returning guests, Oakwood Premier did lose a few immediately after the siege "And not because the guests themselves wanted to leave, but because they were instructed by headquarters overseas to move out. We tackled this by convincing both local and overseas-based officers of our key clients that full normalcy had been restored at Oakwood. To date, our records indicate, they have by-and-large all come back," observes Legaspi. Oakwood continues to enjoy an extremely high "repeat guest ratio" or a high likelihood of a guest's return.

In the industry, nevertheless, the figure to watch is the revenue per available room (revpar). While occupancy rate is the better-known performance indicator, the figure may be misleading as it does not take into account how much guests are actually willing to pay for the accommodations.

Selling fruitcakes with a heart

FRUITCAKES landed in the Philippines with the arrival of the Americans. But in the last 100 years, Filipinos embraced this culinary tradition with gusto, making it a "tradition" all their own.

In Manila, no one beats our own "Fruitcake Lady," Ju.d Lao. Her home baked fruitcakes have been known not only in the Philippines, but have reached as far as the United States, Canada, Belgium, Germany, China, Singapore, Taiwan and Japan. Local banks like Cocobank, and Equitable-PCI bank are some of her clients. And even well-known establishments like Boysen, Hi-Precision Medical laboratories and So-En buy her goods.

JU.D LAO: I think basically, you have to believe in your own product. You have to step in the shoes of a customer to feel their needs.

Tips

The lady who has been in the fruitcake business gives tips on her business. "I think basically, you have to believe in your own product. You have to step in the shoes of a customer to feel their needs," Ju.d says. "If I want to buy a gift, I'm buying something that represents me. It has to look good, and it has to have quality." Balikbayans call long distance to place their orders before coming to Manila for the holidays, just to reserve fruitcakes for their families.

When asked for her secret in success, Ju.d. Lao says, "I think I walk the extra mile. Although profit is important for a business, doing something that is unexpected always put us in a better light with our clients."

For example, there are the lonely clients who call up to place orders, but somehow end up in deep conversations with Ju.D. "Sometimes they are very lonely old people who just need someone to talk to—and I don't mind listening. Sometimes I end up listening to them for 45 minutes!" she exclaims, laughing.

Honesty

According to Ju.d, honesty is another important business policy of hers. "We had a client who faxed and picked up his orders, but he overpaid P10." Ju.D recalls, "We misplaced his order slip and it took us three days to find it. When we did, we called and informed him that he still had P10 with us. He replied, "It's okay, we'll be buying *pa naman eh.*" But we felt obliged to inform him, and we felt better for it afterwards."

Philantropic side

On the philantropic side, Ju.D hires additional staff for her fruitcake production every year, mostly working students and out-of-school youth. Also, instead of disposing of her egg whites, she puts them in ice bags, freezes them, and bring them to worthy charities. One such charity is Girls' Town (behind Shoemart Megamall). Another is a congregation of nuns who used the egg whites to produce Lengua de Gato. "Somebody is getting my egg shells this year to use as fertilizer in her garden," Ju.d says. "I wish we could help "Zero Waste" in saving the environment, too.

A visit to this energetic lady who still bakes the cakes and cookies with her maids in the kitchen is not only educational but also inspirational. When her fruitcake season ends, she is active in doing charity work with either the Buddhist nuns in Taiwan or the Catholic nuns here in the Philippines. "With regards to your question on how to sell fruitcakes," she says, "I think you have to sell it with your heart. Put your heart into whatever you are doing and you will succeed."

For those who are either curious or interested in Ju.D's delicious fruitcakes which comes in three flavors, or her Chewy Chewkies and The Ginger Cookies, you may call 633-1188 or 633-0260 for your inquiries.

'All I needed to learn about marketing I learned while caroling'

From page B2-8

heart. Each of us had a musical instrument to play. We even had a strategy of knocking first before singing. We wore better clothes than most other carolers.

I told my group that homeowners would give us more if they liked our singing and if they saw we had nice clothes on. At 5 years old, I already knew the importance of giving value!

Fads, pricing and inventory

When I was 9, I sold rubber bands, *tex* (cards), and marbles. They were the "in" things then, much like the Yugi oh! cards and Crush Gear now.

When I was 10, our house burned down, leaving us with nothing to go by. But I got a chance to buy a set of stickers, which I immediately sold to my classmates by piece. Of course, I only had a small profit but I used it to buy two sets of stickers to again sell.

Then I got 4 sets to sell…until I had a bagful of stickers.

My business grew because I plowed back my earnings into the sticker venture.

One day, I sold all my stickers at bargain price and didn't buy any more. I knew less people would buy from me, so I had to stop selling. After all, everybody had a lot of stickers already. They didn't have any need or want of more.

Money was not that important to me then as it is now.

But this is only because I have so much to pay for now in my business.

Early on, I already loved seeing my business grow and making my customers happy. I have never minded working too much. I work because I like working. And I love the challenge that a real business brings. Until now, I like satisfying my customers and helping people."

For comments or questions, please email us at MarketingRx@SaltAndLightVentures.com

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Honda Cars Quezon City, Inc. Tel. Nos. (02) 712 6850 to 61, 731 1532,732 8556,732 8166
Honda Cars Shaw Tel. Nos. (02) 717 1681 to 85
Honda Cars Manila Tel. No. (02) 562 4546
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Honda Cars Pangasinan Tel. No. (075) 522 1488
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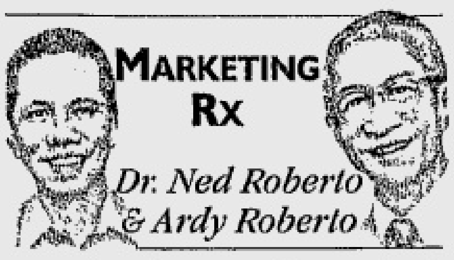
BUSINESS *Friday*

'All I needed to learn about marketing I learned while caroling'



Dr. Ned Roberto & Ardy Roberto

LAST Tuesday night, the younger MRx was invited to speak at the launch of The Business Club's 1st Entrepreneur Forum.

A co-speaker at the launch was Rossana Llenado, the entrepreneur who started AHEAD Learning Systems, Inc. Rossana was recently awarded as one of Entrepreneur magazine's Top 10 Entrepreneurs of the Year (for small and medium sized businesses). Her tutorial and review centers are ahead of the competition because of her applying at least three of the basic Ps of marketing better than the rest.

Product. Rossana aggressively recruits only cum laude and magna cum laude graduates of top universities to teach and "deliver" their products. (Since AHEAD was established in 1995, it's customers have maintained the highest passing percentage in the entrance tests of top schools.)

Place. Rossana situated AHEAD's five tutorial centers in the malls instead of placing them where the competition is - near schools. Makes sense to us since students like to hang out at the malls.

Price. Rossana created a perception of high value and quality by pricing her tutorial and review courses at as high as P7,000, while the competition charged as low as P3,000. She also confirms this perception by providing value-added services and products such as a reviewers and career guide, reference manuals on the top 10 colleges and universities in Metro Manila, and original courseware and test-taking techniques.

A former full-time housewife with four kids, Rossana learned the basics of marketing and entrepreneurship at an early age—at 6 years old organizing caroling gigs in her neighborhood and at eight, setting up a distribution network to sell her polvoron.

MRx thinks that we all could learn or review the basics of marketing from Rossana. Here are her lessons on marketing and business in her own words:

"Let me begin by telling you that I did not have any kind of advantage. Our family was poor and no one gave me any capital. My parents were not important people. We didn't have any connections. When I was young, I lived in Los Baños, a small town in Laguna. I was a very shy girl, and I liked reading.

As you know, reading is usually a hobby of loners.

Despite this, I have always believed I was born an entrepreneur. I've always liked marketing. I formally started becoming one at the age of 8, when I sold polvoron to my classmates.

Importance of distribution

As early as then, I had retailers to sell my goods to their classmates and friends. I even shared my polvoron to those who helped me wrap them.

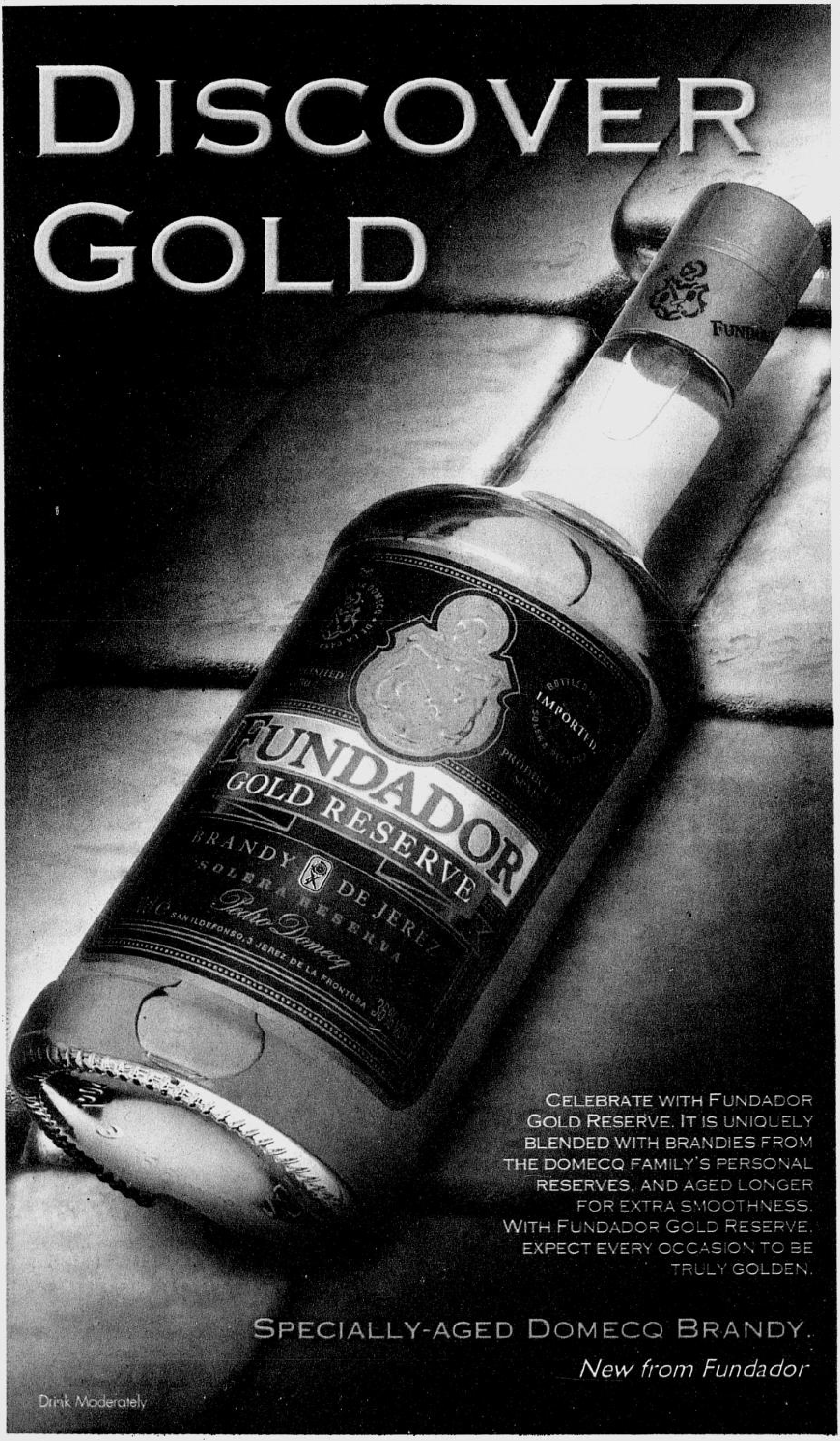
That was my first business venture.

But then again, how would you call the caroling stint I organized and led when I was 5or 6?

Packaging and perception

I still remember making sure my group knew as many Christmas songs by

MARKETING RX/ B2-7



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Trade war? Shoppers gobble up China goods

NEW YORK—The contents of Rose Casalino's shopping cart might provide a clearer picture of US-China trade relations than Chinese Premier Wen Jiabao's New York visit this week.

While talk of a possible US-China trade war was heating up in diplomatic circles recently, Casalino was shopping for her goddaughter at a Target store in the New York City borough of Queens.

She bought a video-game joystick, a CD player and a bathrobe, and eyed a Barbie doll mattress. All the products were high in quality and inexpensively priced, she said.

And unbeknownst to her, all were made in China.

"If I can afford it, I'll buy it," Casalino said. "I don't pay attention to where the products are made. I really don't." Her shopping habits show the voracious American appetite for cheap foreign goods.

It's this hunger that makes the chances of US-Chinese trade tensions escalating into an all-out trade war more diplomatic myth than economic reality, economists say. American shoppers—who are also voters—would not allow Washington to bar Chinese goods from US shelves, the economists say.

"There will be no turning back the clock," said John Lonski, chief economist for Moody's investor service. "American consumers would react so negatively that it's all but an impossibility." According to US government figures, China exported $108.6 billion worth of goods to the United States in the first nine months of this year. In contrast, US companies sold only $18.9 billion worth of goods in China.

This huge imbalance is at the heart of the trade dispute between the two countries.

Tensions rose last month when the United States capped some imports of Chinese textiles and imposed tariffs on televisions.

China responded by delaying trips to shop for US commodities and threatened duties on some American goods.

During his upcoming visit to Boston, Washington and New York, the Chinese premier is expected to address—in addition to the trade friction—a political dispute over US-backed Taiwan and its call for independence.

The Taiwan issue may indeed heat up, but it is the trade imbalance that has the most implications for US domestic politics, Morgan Stanley economist Stephen Roach said.

"It's not a coincidence that Washington is leaning toward restricting access to foreign imports at a time when the job situation is tough and a presidential election is heating up," Roach said.

Democrats are likely to try to use the significant job losses during the Bush administration as a trump card against Republicans in next year's elections.

Manufacturing groups and politicians have criticized China's fixed currency policy, arguing that the yuan's peg to the US dollar is too low, making Chinese exports unfairly cheap at the expense of hundreds of thousands of US manufacturing jobs.

Still, these cheap exports dominate the racks and floor displays of US retailers. A DVD set, a CD stereo and a karaoke machine greet customers entering a Best Buy store in Queens, New York. All the products were made in China.

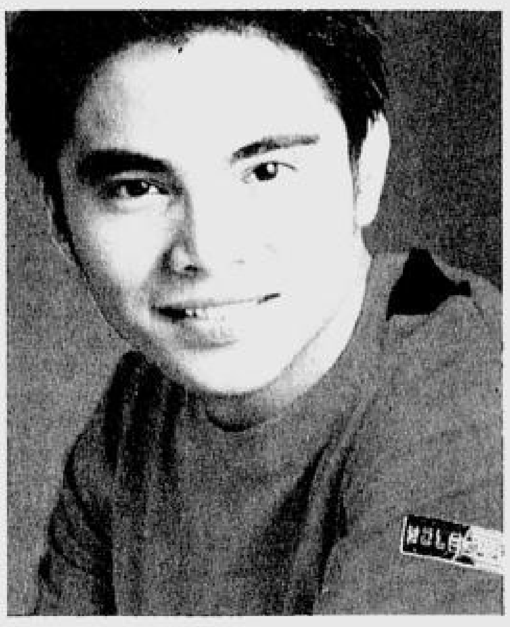
"I did actually glance at a TV set to see if it was made in the US," shopper Artie Benanti said. "But in the end it doesn't matter." Benanti, an education salesman looking for a high- definition television, said he didn't want to take American jobs away. But his choice between a domestic or a foreign product comes down to a simple factor.

"I want the better bargain," he said. *Reuters*

ENTERTAINMENT
E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Louie C. Camino

Marvin makes same wish for seventh year

By Nini Valera



"MY DAD chose that life," says Marvin Agustin. "I'm choosing my life to be better."

ACTOR Marvin Agustin is hoping this will be the last year he and his family would be wishing for the release of his father from prison.

For seven years now, Marvin's father Danilo Cuguyan, 49, has been in jail after he was found guilty of drug-related charges.

"Every year, we wish for him to be free," Marvin tells INQUIRER Entertainment. "It's been a long time that he's in prison, and we hope this is the last year that we'd be wishing for him to be free."

Marvin, 24, says he has nothing to wish for himself.

"There's nothing more I desire for myself," says one of the lead stars in "Malikmata," Canary Films' entry in this year's Metro Manila Film Festival. "But I wish for the country to be better. Elections *na* next year, and I just hope for a bright future for all of us.

"This season might be the perfect time for us to think of who we should vote (for president)," he adds. "It should not be *sana* a personal choice, but an intellectual decision."

Starting young

Maturity had come early to Marvin, who was only 12 when he learned his father was into drugs.

"I saw my dad at his worst," he says. "I was 12 when he started acting weird. At that time, I didn't know he was already into that thing. *Malaki na rin ako noon*, and my Mom started talking to me. She never kept anything from me and my two sisters. It was okay with us to know what was happening. We were able to decide (what to do). We all started working at a young age, and it helped us and made us stronger.

"It reached a point when dad already had to learn a lesson. We had sold a lot of our stuff already, down to the rice cooker. It had come to that, and I felt that it was payback time."

The family made a crucial decision that turned their life around. They moved out of the family compound where they had lived for 13 years and rented a small apartment in Alabang, Muntinlupa.

"We felt we were a family and we should start our life all over again," Marvin relates. "My dad was gone by that time. *Ayaw na naming makialam ang relatives namin sa amin.* We lived in a compound that my *lola* owned so the relatives were there telling us what we should have done or what we should not have done. We were so tired already (of their meddling). It was like that for 13 years."

While living in the small apartment, Marvin, his mother and his sisters worked any job that would help them survive.

"I helped my mom sell stuff ...*tocino, longganisa, torotot, paputok*," Marvin recalls with a laugh. "You name it, we sold it."

An actor first

At about this time, Marvin had also decided he would grow up to be a businessman. Today, he has several food businesses which he runs with the help of one of his sisters. He has also invested in real estate, including a five-hectare farm in Baguio City.

But before Marvin became a businessman, he was an actor first. ABS-CBN discovered him in 1996 while he was a member of the marketing staff of Tia Maria Bar and Restaurant and was promoting the place in the shows of the network. Since then, Marvin has been a contract star of the network. His contract will expire in 2007.

"It's not true that I am moving to GMA 7," he clarifies. "I only taped for 'Mel & Jay' yes-

MARVIN/C6

"MR. BASKETBALL" Bob Soler. RICHARD CHEN

The original 'Captain Barbell' gives up

/C8

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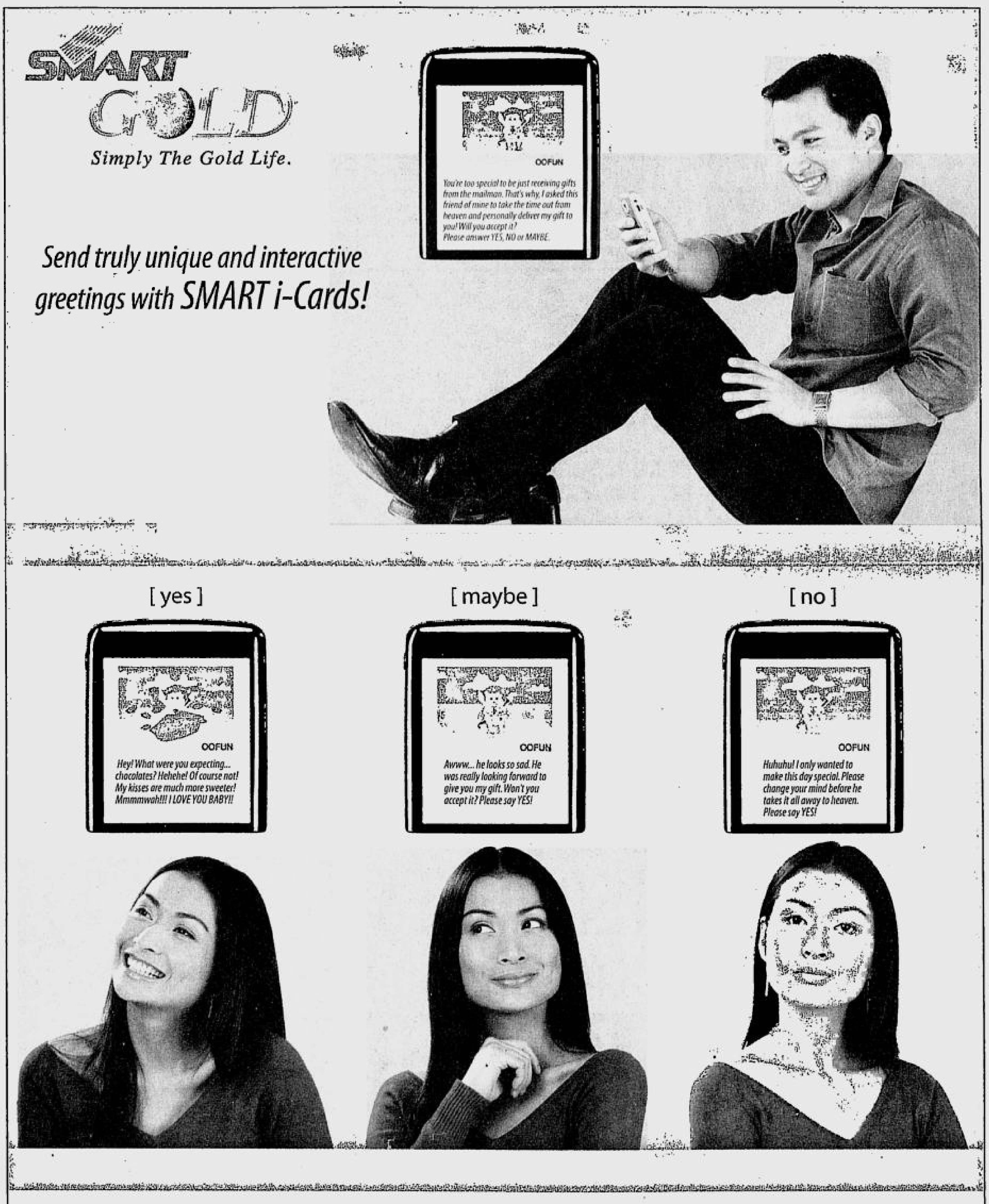
OctoArts Films DOLBY
presents
VIC SOTTO FANTASTIC MAN
Movie Promo Tour
DEC 13 • 5pm Centermall, UGF SM City STA. MESA
DEC 14 • 4pm Entertainment Plaza, LGF SM City NORTH EDSA



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Please answer YES, NO or MAYBE.

[yes]
OOFUN
Hey! What were you expecting... chocolates? Hehehe! Of course not! My kisses are much more sweeter! Mmmmwah!!! I LOVE YOU BABY!!

[maybe]
OOFUN
Awww... he looks so sad. He was really looking forward to give you my gift. Won't you accept it? Please say YES!

[no]
OOFUN
Huhuhu! I only wanted to make this day special. Please change your mind before he takes it all away to heaven. Please say YES!

Introducing SMART's first mobile interactive animated greeting service that gives a twist to your personal messages.

Send a truly unique greeting every time and even add some personal touches. Each animated greeting you send comes with a question which can be answered with *Yes*, *No*, or *Maybe*. You can also add your personal message. Then, each reply from the receiver shows different and amusing reactions from the animated character. What's more, there's an i-Card to suit virtually any occasion. You'll be sure to delight anyone you send i-Cards to. Send a SMART i-Card today.

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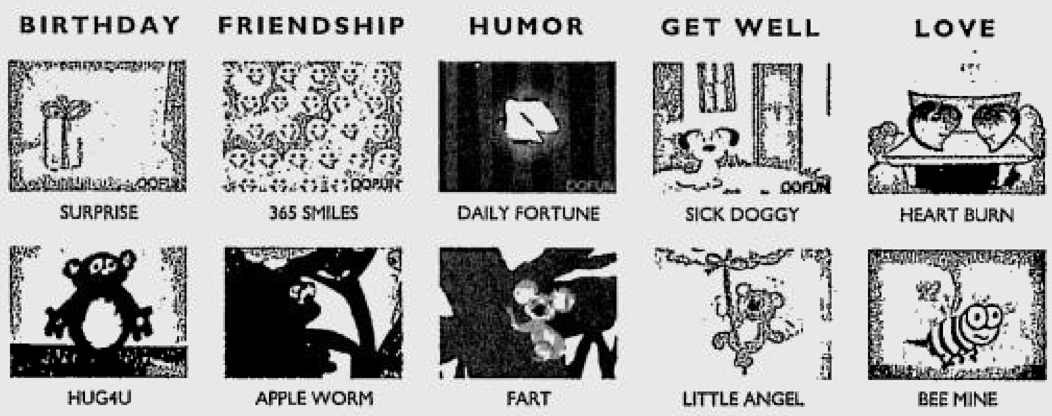

BIRTHDAY: SURPRISE, HUG4U
FRIENDSHIP: 365 SMILES, APPLE WORM
HUMOR: DAILY FORTUNE, FART
GET WELL: SICK DOGGY, LITTLE ANGEL
LOVE: HEART BURN, BEE MINE

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DID YOU KNOW...

SOUL diva **Jaya**, a regular host of GMA 7's Sunday noontime show, "SOP," is often seen at ABS-CBN. But that doesn't necessarily mean she has switched networks. Jaya goes to ABS-CBN to work out at the Fitness First gym on the fifth floor of the 9501 building.

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Strings: The Story of Acoustic

Nov 28 [3PM]
Alabang Town Center
[Town Plaza]
w/ Arnee; Jay-R; NINA; MYMP; King; & Divo

Dec 12 (3PM)
Ayala Center Makati
[Glorietta Activity Center]
w/ Arnee; Paolo Santos; Jimmy Bondoc; NINA; 17:28; Jay-R; & King

The Bands: Plug & Play

Nov 29 (3PM)
Alabang Town Center
[Town Plaza]
w/ Barbie's Cradle; Gloc 9; Moonstar 88; Slapshock; Kamikazee; & Bridges

Dec 13 (3PM)
Ayala Center Makati
[Glorietta Activity Center]
w/ Barbie's Cradle; Bridges; Gloc 9; Truefaith; & South Border

POP Music: Divas Atbp.

Nov 30 (3PM)
Alabang Town Center
[Town Plaza]
w/ Akafellas; Dingdong Avanzado; Jessa Zaragosa; Jed Maddela; Josh Santana; Geneva Cruz; Marielle; Sheng & Lani Misalucha

Dec 14 (3PM)
Ayala Center Makati
[Glorietta Activity Center]
w/ Aiza Seguerra; Dingdong Avanzado; Jessa Zaragosa; Jed Maddela; Josh Santana; Karylle; Sarah Geronimo; & Sheng

Catch the exciting fireworks display on Nov. 29 & 30 at the Alabang Town Center.
Plus! Grab a chance to get collectible CDs and cassettes at special bargain prices--visit Alabang Town Center [Cinema Lobby] from Nov 24 to 30 and EDSA Mall Ayala Center Makati from Dec. 8 to 14, 2003.

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CCP COMPLEX, PASAY CITY
Prime Season Rates: P50 (Entrance) & P200 (Ride-All-You-Can Tags) will take effect on Dec. 12 and all throughout the Christmas Season

Susan's edge

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

FOR years now, GMA-7's **Susan Enriquez** has been a familiar fixture on daily newscasts as a field reporter. But she has always been different from other on-camera news talents because she isn't tall, *tisay* and glamorous.

In fact, she's one of the few TV news people who look *masa*, despite the hair color and make-up she now sports, and this is what makes her unique. This is also why C-D-E viewers find it easy to relate to her.

Finally recognizing her edge over most other female news talents, GMA-7 has given Susan her own non-news show.

We caught the program last Sunday and found it a good showcase for Ms Enriquez's unique strengths.

Since her image is *masa*, Susan has been given an advice show that deals with really basic problems and concerns. Last Sunday, they were on family planning, varicose veins, and the different ways to cook canned tuna. You can't get much more basic than that!

The family planning feature was presented in an interesting way—women with many children complained that the "culprits" were their husbands and their overly-enthusiastic "*panggigigil*."

This served as a natural transition to the methods of birth control that Susan and some doctors discussed and demonstrated.

The varicose feature focused on some department store salesgirls who were obliged to stay on their feet for eight hours each day. This made them particularly susceptible to varicose veins, so they were good subjects for the different vein-reduction procedures that the program went into.

Finally, a student on a budget who was fed up with canned tuna meals was taught three ways to make the cheap but boring foodstuff tastier. The dishes were easy to cook and suited the tight budgets of students and people earning only small salaries.

The effectivity and success of Susan's show indicates that a program that's popular with C-D-E viewers can be presented without the usual OA hysteria and ridiculous exaggeration that characterizes quite a number of so-called *pang-masa* productions.

We trust that other TV people will learn from this and tone down their own shows' excesses.

The "how-to"-"fix-it" orientations of Susan's program make it helpful to viewers, especially since the show makes it a point to avoid jargon, and tries to make its features accessible to most viewers in terms of language and treatment.

But it should avoid the overly-facile approach that solves problems in too pat, quick and simplistic a manner. And it should make it a point to refer viewers to competent professionals for more detailed evaluation and treatment.

ENRIQUEZ unique and *masa*

ArtFilm feature

SHOWING at ArtFilm, Cinema 2, Greenbelt 1 is "Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress," **Dai Sijie**'s nostalgic tale of love and literature lost and found.

The film follows two boys and a little seamstress as they try to survive the tyranny of toil and boredom in the course of their Maoist "re-education," with romance and reading.

'Brightest Stars'

STAR Records' "The Brightest Stars of Christmas" showcases the music company's artists' rendition of favorite Yuletide tunes.

Carol Banawa with "Nakaraang Pasko," **Piolo Pascual** singing "Pasko Na Sinta Ko," **Jessa Zaragosa** with "Miss Kita Kung Christmas," Akafellas with "Paskong-Pasko"—etc.

The album's ongoing mall tour hits SM-Davao on Dec. 14 and SM North Edsa on Dec. 23.

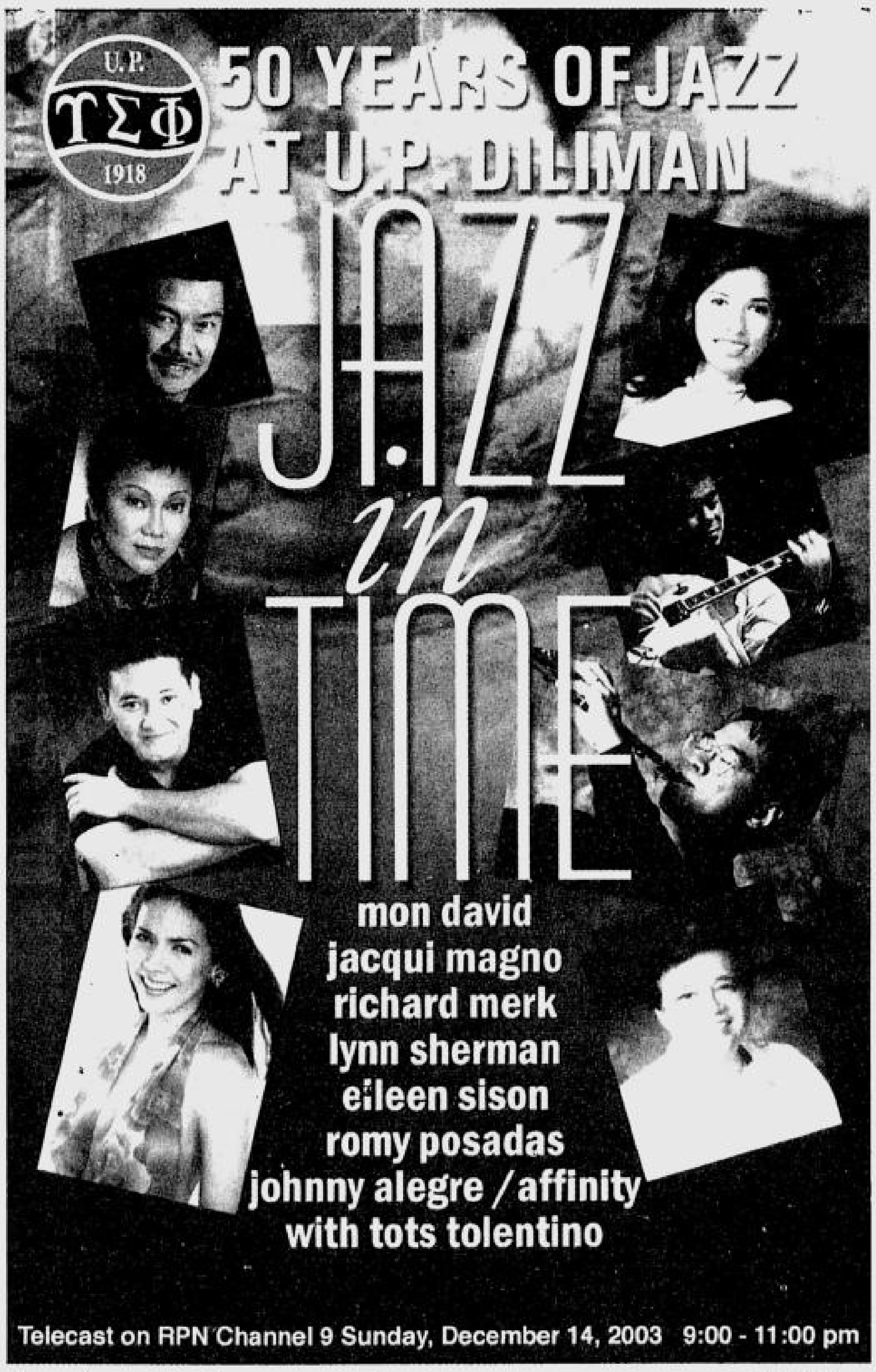
Elbow Room performers

ELBOW Room at The Podium fields these acoustic performers this month: Dec. 13 and 20, **Maegan Aguilar** and the Flower Child. Dec. 17, Lucid Band. Dec. 18, MP3 (Jay, April and Erol). Dec. 19, Rica Arambulo. Call 634-1404.

13th album

THE COMPANY is working on its 13th album, titled "Mahal Kong Radyo," for Pop Art Music Vicor Records. The album will be released in the first quarter of 2004.

The popular singing group is made up of Sweet Plantado, **Annie Quintos, Cecille Bautista, Reuben Laurente, Andrei Castillo** and **Moy Ortiz.**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SHOW STOPPER

HOT NIGHT. Edu Manzano and Charlene Gonzales host the Ad Congress show on a very cool night

'Whatta Singkwenta!' gives away ₱3 million

By Leah C. Salterio
Contributor

PERFORMERS ALL. Executives as well as stars joined in the fun and the performing, from (from above down) Chair Gabby Lopez doing the "otso-otso," VP Charo Santos-Concio (left), Aga Muhlach, Piolo Pascual (below) and Ai Ai de las Alas (bottom) who puts her mouth where it shouldn't be.

IN KEEPING with the network's 50th anniversary celebration, ABS-CBN hosted the "Whatta Singkwenta" party at the recent 18th Ad Congress in Baguio City.

It was one of the network's ways of sharing its windfall—P1 billion in advertising revenues every month since May—not only with its audience but also with its advertisers and clients.

Nearly P3 million in cash prizes was given away during the party, which was graced by close to 3,000 delegates.

"We wanted to give back to our audience and the advertising industry the blessings that we've enjoyed the past 50 years," said Maloli Espinosa-Manalastas, ABS-CBN vice president for government, corporate affairs and PR, and also the chief of staff of the network's Ad Congress committee.

P50,000 each

The network gave away the biggest cash prize among all the Ad Congress sponsors. Chosen in an electronic raffle during the ABS-CBN night were the names of 50 winners, each of whom received P50,000. The last P50,000 was multiplied five times, or P250,000 for the recipient.

ABS-CBN chair Eugenio "Gabby" Lopez III and president Freddie M. Garcia danced the *otso-otso* on stage with Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon during the "Whatta Singkwenta" party.

Lopez was also the head of the 18th Ad Congress.

The network flew in Irish jazz singer Siobhan Pettit from Dublin, Ireland, to perform at the ABS-CBN night last Nov. 20. The following night, Pettit also sang in a special party hosted by Studio 23 at the Summer Place along Marcos Highway.

ABS-CBN also brought to Baguio City the hottest bands: South Border and Retrospect performed during the party, while Barbie's Cradle rocked the scene at Summer Place in a party for Baguio residents and DJ Shortcut from San Francisco hosted a hip-hop party at Gimbal's.

ABS-CBN talents as well as executives performed on stage for the delegates. And so did the heads, creative directors and other bosses of the top advertising agencies and production houses.

The biggest stars of ABS-CBN also performed for the delegates. Ai Ai de las Alas did the opening salvo, sending the audience in stitches with her stand-up comedy act.

Helping Ai Ai with the hosting chores were Edu Manzano, Charlene Gonzales and Ricky Gonzales, creative director of Jimenez Basic Advertising.

The women screamed their lungs out and clicked away with their cameras when heartthrobs Aga Muhlach, Piolo Pascual and Bernard Palanca sang.

One of the most applauded numbers was the Broadway medley by Michael de Mesa, JM Rodriguez, Calvin Millado, Robert Seña, Dessa, Dulce, Audie Gemora, John Arcilla, Lyn Sherman and ABS-CBN's special projects manager Mickey Muñoz.

Best booth

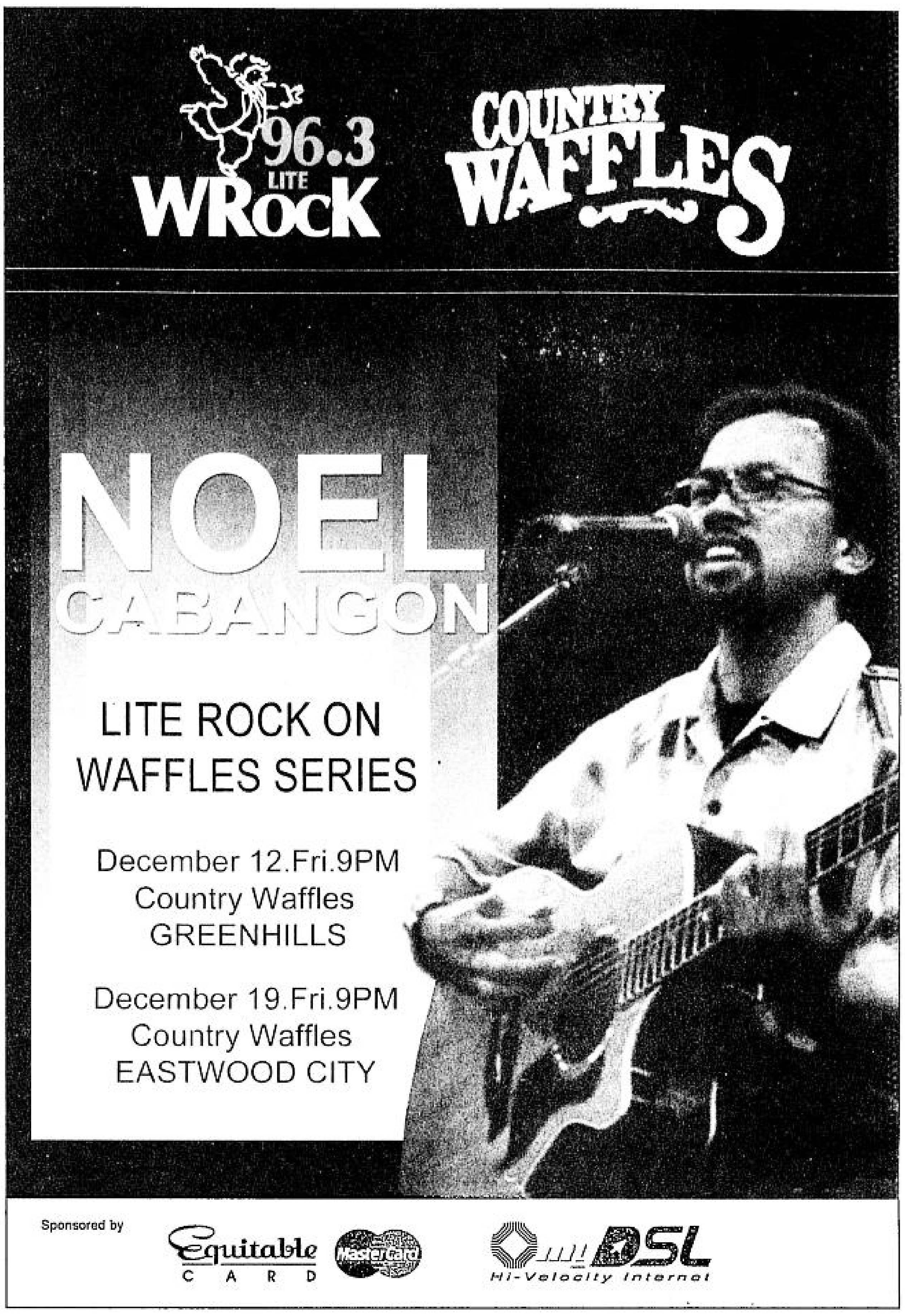
ABS-CBN started planning for the Ad Congress as early as April. By October, everything had been carefully planned and laid out, said Edge Pamute, ABS-CBN events and non-traditional marketing media director.

Outside the party venue, ABS-CBN Interactive put up a giant video wall which showed everything happening inside. Given away were cash prizes and Nokia 6600 cell phones. ABS-CBN Publishing gave away copies of its magazines like Metro, Chalk and Star Studio, among many others, and set up a picture booth where delegates could have their souvenir Ad Congress pose on a magazine cover.

At the exhibit area, ABS-CBN won the best booth, which also attracted the biggest number of visitors, including President Macapagal-Arroyo. ABS-CBN stars were present at the booth every day to sign autographs and pose for pictures with the delegates.

The noontime show, "Masayang Tanghali Bayan," went on a live remote broadcast from Burnham Park, while the early morning show, "Magandang Umaga Bayan," aired from Club John Hay throughout the Ad Congress week. "TV Patrol" also did a live airing from Baguio.

"Everything went well and it was more than we expected," says Jose "Pitoy" Garcia, chair of the ABS-CBN Ad Congress committee. "It was smooth-sailing all the way. It was successful any way you look at it."



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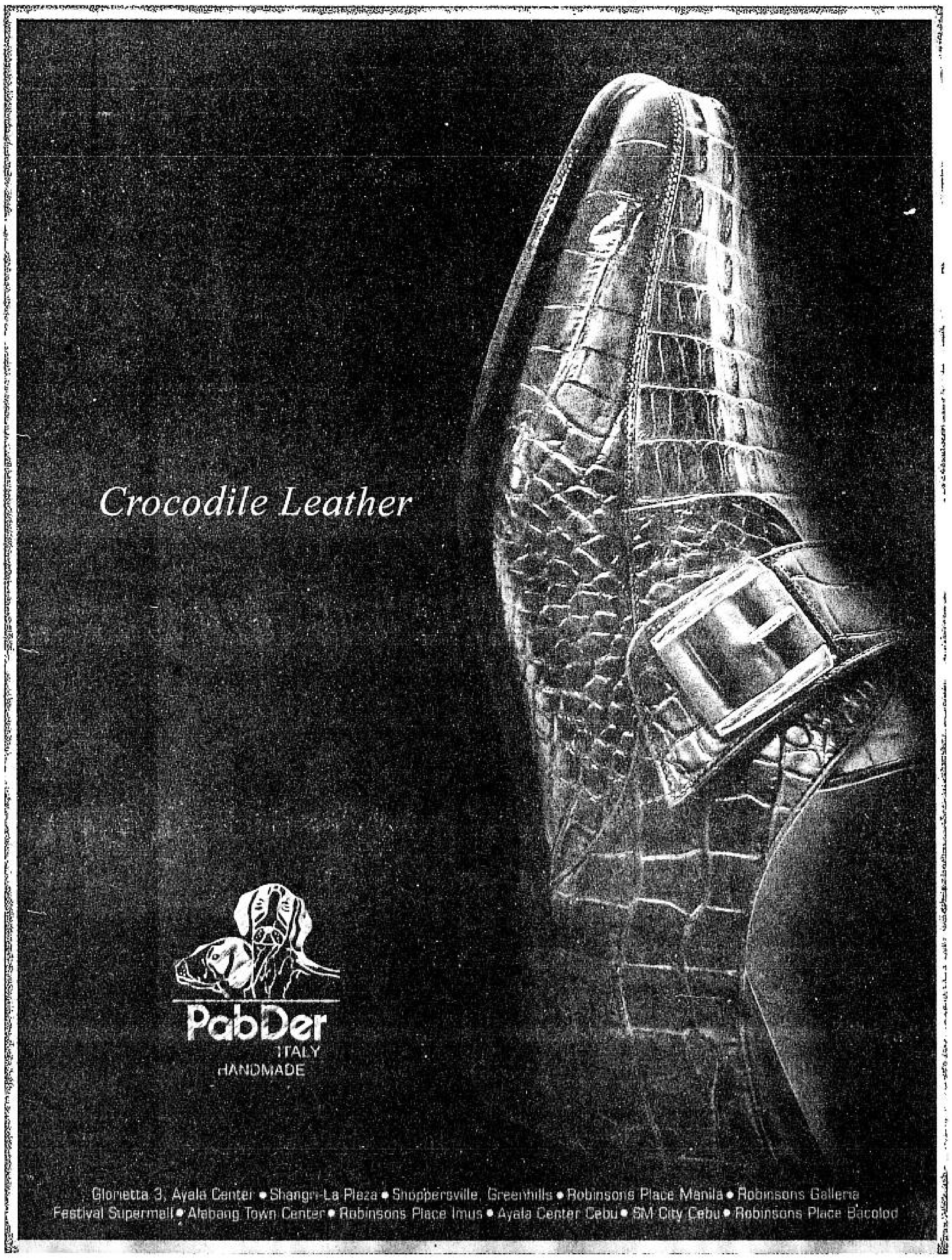

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"SPAGETI" A LA PDI. First, there are the original Sex Bomb Girls (left). Then, the plot, or the sauce, thickens with the participation of Advertising's Kenny Nuyda (right). Finally, there's "Spageti" stripped to the barest essentials, with Editorial staffers.

STAR CITY

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and the City of Manila

Mayor WENCESLAO TRINIDAD
and the City of Pasay

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DANCE PARADE, FLOAT & REYNA NG ALIWAN COMPETITION

NIGHTLY CONCERTS
FIREWORKS DISPLAY

GRAND TIANGGE

DEC. 11, 2003

TIME	ACTIVITY	VENUE
8:00am	EXHIBIT OPENS	ALONG SOTTO
4:00pm	RIBBON CUTTING	ASEAN GARDEN
6:00pm	PAMASKONG PASAKALYE CONCERT	INFRONT OF ALIW THEATER
10:00pm	FIREWORKS DISPLAY	CCP COMPLEX

DEC. 12, 2003

TIME	ACTIVITY	VENUE
8:00am	ARRIVAL OF DELEGATES	STAR CITY
8:00am	EXHIBIT OPENS	ALONG SOTTO
10:00am	BRIEFING WITH REYNA NG ALIWAN CONTESTANTS	STAR CAFETERIA
1:00pm	WELCOME CEREMONY BRIEFING OF DELEGATES AND "PRINCESS OF THE MOON" PRESENTATION	ALIW THEATER
6:00pm	PAMASKONG PASAKALYE CONCERT	ALONG SOTTO
10:00pm	FIREWORKS DISPLAY	CCP COMPLEX

DEC. 13, 2003

TIME	ACTIVITY	VENUE
8:00am	EXHIBIT OPENS	ALONG SOTTO
12:00nn	MOVE FLOATS TO QUIRINO	
3:00pm	ASSEMBLY OF DELEGATES	QUIRINO GRANDSTAND
5:00pm	GRAND PARADE	QUIRINO GRANDSTAND TO CCP COMPLEX
9:00pm	AWARDS NIGHT CONCERT FIREWORKS DISPLAY	ALONG SOTTO

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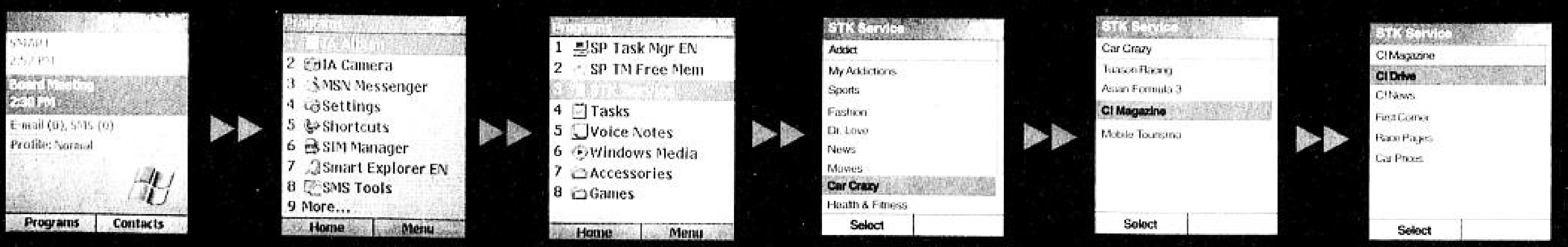
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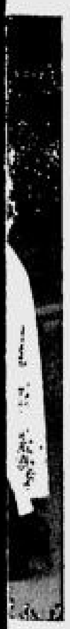


DENNIS MEETS BABE. IPI president Valdes and Diana Zubiri

BABE MEETS BABE. Bea Alonzo and Tessa Prieto-Valdes

ACAPELLA serenade by the Monserrat San Beda Choir

The BASH

NG the 18th anniversary of the INQUIRER last Tuesday , the buzz was that "FPJ is ng!"

J, the President wannabe, ot come at all. But President pagal-Arroyo did. And so host of singers and dancers ctors who made sure that a time was had by all, the IN- staffers, their families and ls.

e Sexbomb Dancers danced ang to their signature single eti Song," and so did INQUIR- ployees.

e other performers, who d the spruced-up INQUIRER way into a concert hall, were Zubiri, Bea Alonso, Nikki z, Ketchup Eusebio, Karylle uez and Nina.

e "Spageti Song" was the s winner. Editorial depart- s Mercy Rosales, Santi Al- ra, Roy Sarmiento and Rom- Lalata bagged the grand in an inter-departmental st with their performance of same dance, with the men only in white boxer shorts ed bow ties.

keeping with the anniver- debut theme, PDI officers mployees did the traditional on de honor.

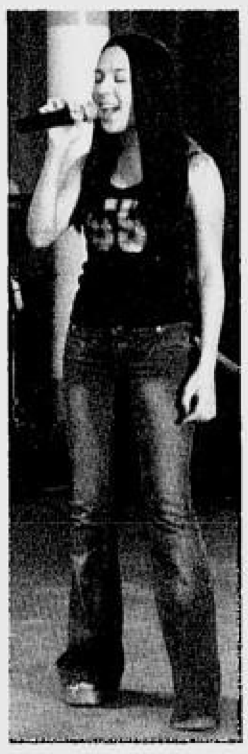
na Zubiri, who also attend- t year's celebration wearing amous flyover getup, sang ongs this time. Dressed in a see-through, she sang to is Valdes, INQUIRER Publica- nc. president.

t year, Mandaluyong Mayor ur Abalos filed grave scan- harges against the sexy star she posed on the city's fly- dressed only in a red bra and s for a magazine cover.

ape, Music Motion and up bands had the INQUIRER oyees dancing to the wee

e Monserat San Beda Choir r serenaded the audience heir pop acapella numbers. mbers of the Music Theater dation Philippines did an ex- of their "On the Wings of ' concert series.

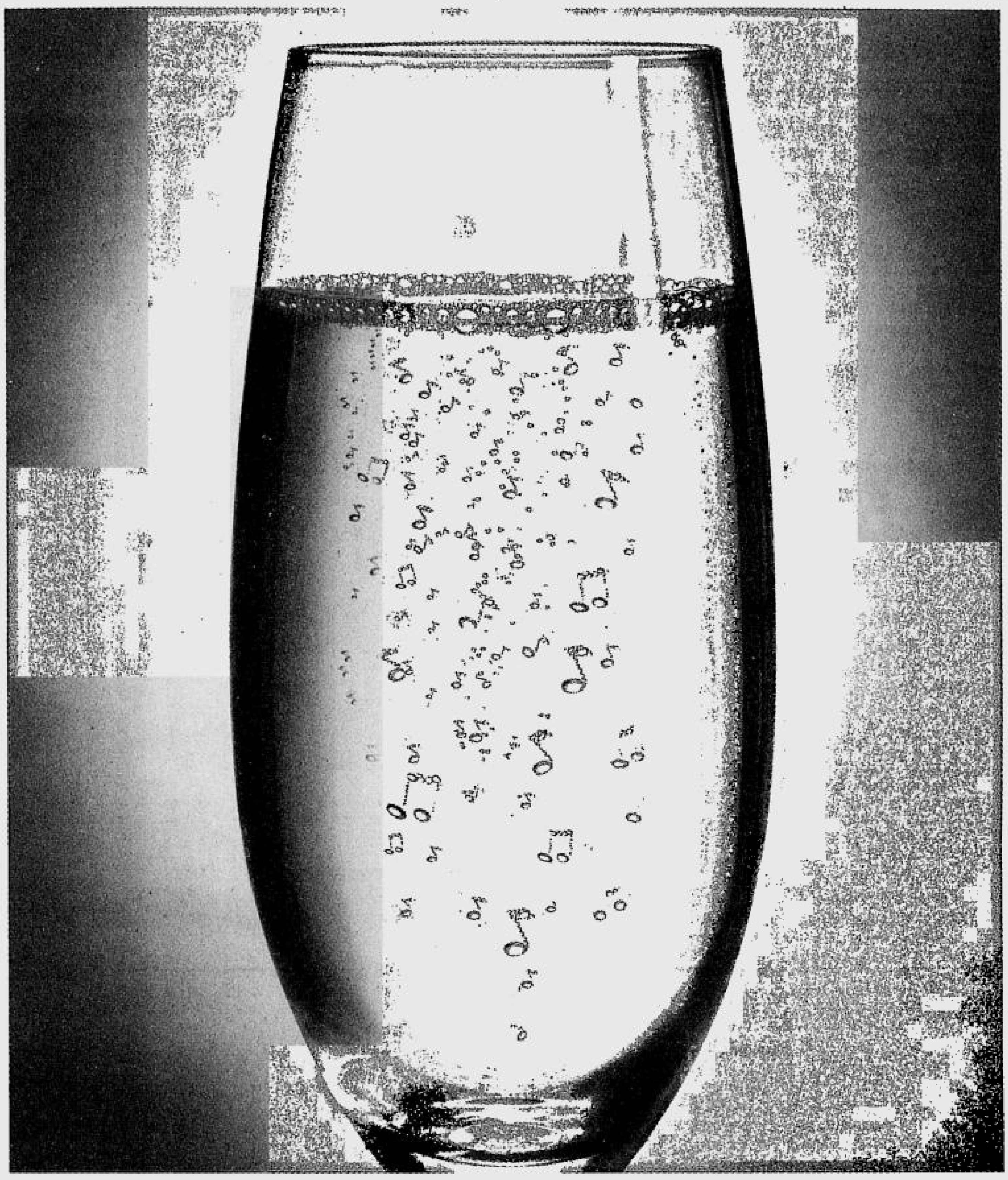
d a good time was indeed y all.



COOINGS AND GOINGS. (From top) Nina sings to a hopeful Boy Abing and a bashful *Mang* Doming Sabinay, both from Administration. Nikki Valdez croons to a thrilled Noli Navarro of IT. Karyl Marquez goes it alone. And Escape band holds the PDI audience captive.

PHOTOS BY RYAN LIM, E.V. ESPIRITU, RANDY HORMILLOSA, RUDY ESPERAS

SHOW TIME



End the year on a high note.

This Christmas, enjoy the soul soothing symphonies of the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra with pop icon Kyla as The Concert at The Pen celebrates its 20th year. Likewise, treat yourself to your favorite Christmas Carols performed live at The Lobby by the internationally renowned Loboc Children's Choir. Then round out the year Peninsula style with our very own New Year's Eve Gala Ball and Dinner featuring the Nonoy Lopez Band, Hyperbeat and X.O.P. These are just a few of the Peninsula traditions that will help you find true harmony this season.

THE PENINSULA
MANILA

20th Christmas Concert at The Pen (5:00-7:00 PM)
The Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra under the baton of Maestro Ruggero Barbieri
December 13

Your World. Your Lifestyle.

Caroling at The Lobby (6:30-7:15 PM)
Loboc Children's Choir
December 19

Coro Animo (6:30-7:15 PM)
December 20, 22 & 23

New Year's Eve Gala Ball and Dinner
Lobby Dinner Buffet (9:00 PM-12:00 MN)
Entertainment featuring Nonoy Lopez Band, Hyperbeat and X.O.P. (10:00 PM-4:00 AM)
P3,850 for adults
P2,375 for children 12 and below

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Marvin makes same wish for 7th year

From page C1

terday (Thursday) as a guest. I don't know how that talk started."

Marvin, however, admits that he is not too happy about the way the story of his Channel 2 soap, "Sa Dulo ng Walang Hanggan," is going. New characters were added to the cast, including a character played by Angelika dela Cruz, who recently transferred to the network when her GMA 7 contract expired.

"But I'm all right," says Marvin. "I already had a meeting with them (management), and they assured me they're fixing things. So I'm counting on their word *na lang*."

As an actor, Marvin has begun to take himself seriously.

"At first, I was doing it for the money, to help the family," he admits. "But after I took up this management of the arts course at the Asian Institute of Management, *nabuksan ang utak ko*. I learned I should be proud of being an actor. I now explore myself.

"For example, my role in 'Malikmata' might not be different from the roles I've done before."

Marvin plays the grandson of a murder victim (Barbara Perez). With the help of Sarah (Rica Peralejo), who has psychic abilities, Marvin tracks down the killer.

"But after reading the script, I found the role to be more challenging than I thought." *Medyo tahimik ang* acting *ko rito. Dito ko na*-discover *na maganda palang paglaruan ang* role. *Hindi ko alam 'yon dati*."

He also discovered that destiny does not happen by chance. "It's how you choose your path," he says. "My dad ... he chose that life, and I'm choosing my life to be better."

Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7

Ali 1	ALIPIN
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ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY / LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	ALIPIN
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	ANG BABAE SA BREAKWATER
B	AKO, IKAW, SIYA
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	MR. SUAVE
CINEMA-2	ALIPIN
CINEMA-3	INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	OUT OF TIME
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	STAR RUNNER
CINEMA-6	CHAVIT
CINEMA-7	BABAE SA BREAKWATER
CINEMA-8	18 KARATS
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	GOOD BOY
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	MYSTIC RIVER
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	RUGRATS GO WILD
CINEMA-12	CABIN FEVER
CINEMA-14	JEEPERS CREEPERS 2
CINEMA-15	ELF
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
NE CINEMAGIC - CABANATUAN	
(LAS PINAS)	WRONG TURN
CINEMA-1	CHAVIT
CINEMA-2	LOONEY TUNES
CINEMA-4	DARK BLUE
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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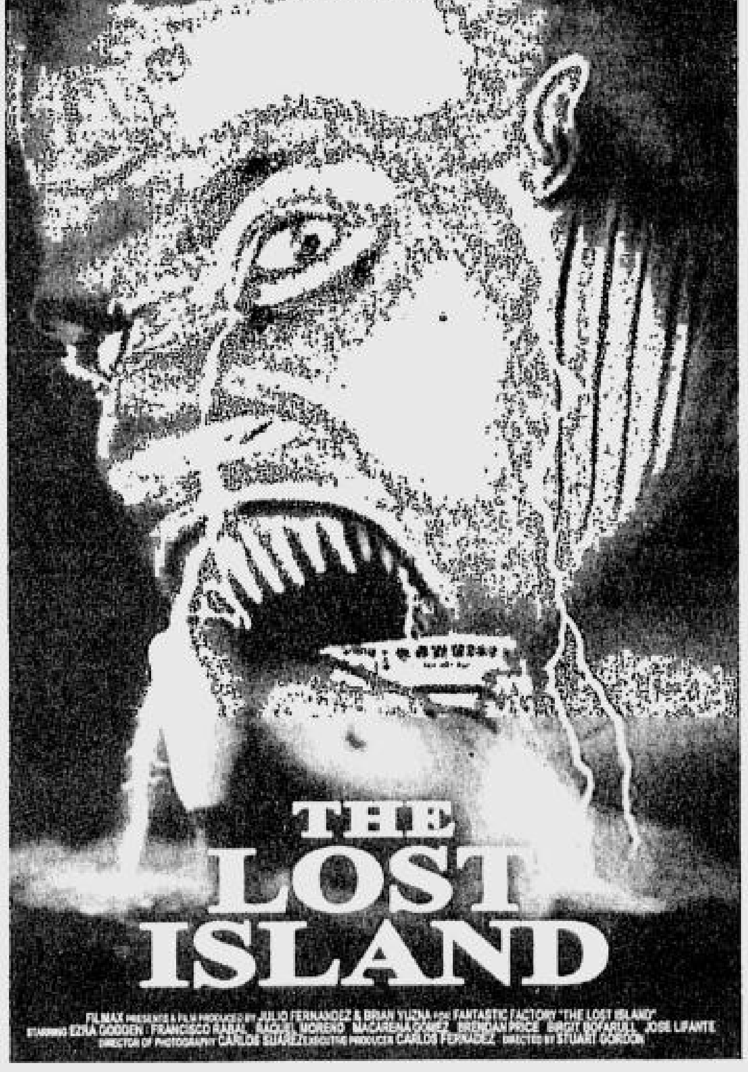

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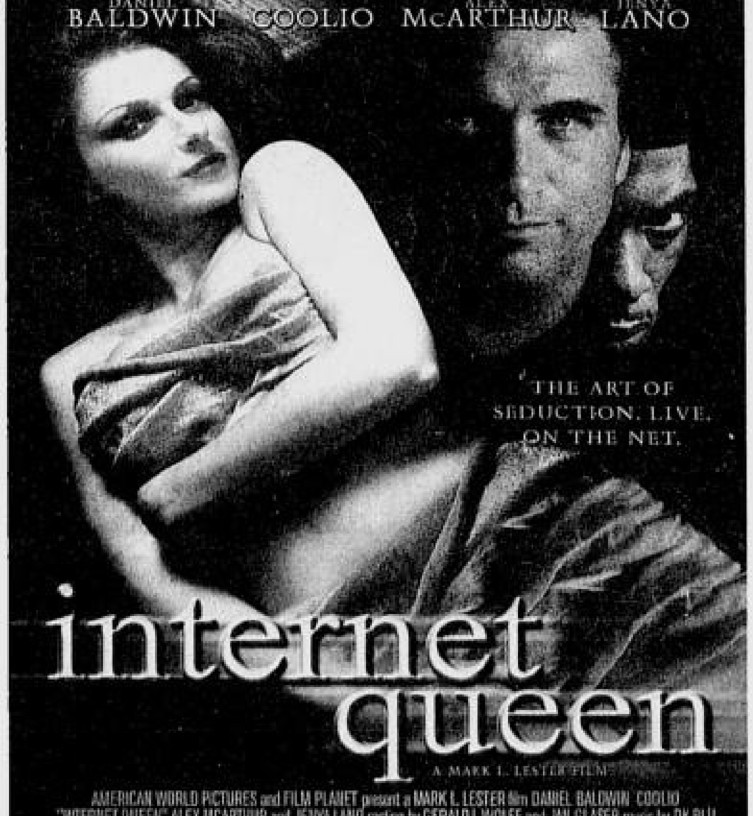
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2 MYSTIC RIVER	2 THE GRUDGE	2 MYSTIC RIVER 12 35 3 25 6 15 9 05	GUARANTEED SEATS THX 2 MYSTIC RIVER 11 55 2 45 5 35 8 25 11 15	2 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
3 CABIN FEVER	THX GUARANTEED SEATS INTOLERABLE CRUELTY 11 30 1 50 4 00 6 10 8 20 10 30	Onstage REGINE VELASQUEZ Dec. 12 & 13, 19 & 20 - 9pm	GUARANTEED SEATS 3 UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN 1 30 3 45 6 00 8 15 10 30	3 ELF
4 OUT OF TIME	4 GOOD BOY		GUARANTEED SEATS 4 ELF 12 25 2 35 4 45 6 55 9 05 11 15	4 GOOD BOY
	5 RUGRATS GO WILD		GUARANTEED SEATS 5 OUT OF TIME 1 30 3 45 6 00 8 15 10 30	5 RUGRATS GO WILD
	6 MYSTIC RIVER			
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5 GOLD (DOLBY EX) RUGRATS
6 GOLD (SDDS) MYSTIC RIVER
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3 (DTS) RESERVE
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5 RESERVE
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5 STAR RUNNER
6 (DOLBY) INTERNET QUEEN
7 (DTS) JEEPER CREEPERS
8 BABAE SA BREAK WATER
9 AKO, IKAW, SIYA

Gotesco Commonwealth
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4 (DOLBY) CABIN FIVER
5 MR SUAVE

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2 GOOD BOY
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6 RUGRATS GO WILD
7 GOOD BOY

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1 OUT OF TIME
2 AKO, IKAW, SIYA
3 (DTS) WISHER

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 ELF
2 (DTS) STAR RUNNER
3 (DOLBY) OUT OF TIME
4 THE PHONE

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel (049) 411.1146
1 STAR RUNNER
2 (DOLBY) INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
3 (DTS) OUT OF TIME
4 WISHER

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 WRONG TURN
2 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
3 (DOLBY) LOONEY TUNE
4

Cinema 2000 MetroTown
(Tarlac) tel(045) 982.1729
1 MY BOSS DAUGHTER
2 SEX SCANDAL
3 (DOLBY) WRONG TURN
4 LOONEY TUNES

Magic Star Cinema
(Tarlac City) tel (045) 611.4305
1 (DOLBY)
2 (DTS)
3

Lianas Cinema
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1 (SDDS) THE TRAIN
2 EVANGELENE KATORSE
3 (DTS) 18 KARAT
4 TUKSO NG PANAHON

Lianas MovieCity
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2 THE PHONE
3 (DTS) OUT OF TIME
4 SEX SCANDAL
5 AKO, IKAW, SIYA

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883
1 MAPUPULANG LABI
2 BABAE SA BREAK WATER
3

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 249.2558
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2 OUT OF TIME
3 MAPUPULANG LABI

Mega Center Mall
(Cabanatuan City) tel (044) 463.3283
1 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
2 ANG BABAE SA BREAK WATER
3 (DTS) LOONEY TUNES
4 DARK BLUE

Cabuyao
(Laguna City) tel (049) 531.4808
1 (DTS) RESERVE
2 RESERVE

Emperor
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1 AKO, IKAW, SIYA
2 CHAVIT SINGSON STORY
3

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 OUT OF TIME
2 FIGHTING TEMPTATION
3 STAR RUNNER
4 BABAE SA BREAK WATER

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045)887-5001 TO 03
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2 INTOLERABLE CRUELTY
3 (DTS ES) OUT OF TIME
4 FIGHTING TEMPTATION

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SHOW TIME

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Dish features the music of Overdrive, 604 with Legato (above left) and South Border (above) tomorrow night, Dec. 13, in a show sponsored by Gentxt and Nestea. Dish is on the third level of the Power Plant Mall at Rockwell Center in Makati. For inquiries, call 898-1771 or 0919-688-0627.

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KING

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King—"The Edge of R&B"—has started to conquer the local music scene and the hearts of music lovers, making his "Maybe" the anthem of hopeful romantics.

"Maybe" was released on radio a little over two months ago. It shot up the charts within weeks of its release.

"Maybe" is now No. 1 on various FM stations such as I-FM, RR, Yes-FM, as well as in regional radio stations across the Philippines.

The music video for the song also remains the most played and most requested video on local music channels. It is currently No. 2 on OPM Myx and No. 5 on the Myx Hit Chart.

Catch King live during his mall tour. On Dec. 14, he will be at SM Davao; Dec. 21, SM Manila; and Dec. 23, SM North Edsa. He will also be at SM Southmall on Dec. 28 and BHF Dagupan on Dec. 30.

UST reunion tomorrow

THE FACULTY of Arts and Letters (Artlets) of the University of Santo Tomas will hold a reunion fellowship of Arts and Letters, Philosophy and Letters, and Liberal Arts alumni tomorrow, Dec. 13, at 6 p.m. at the Thomas Aquinas Research Complex.

The reunion is one of the activities in the run-up to the college's ruby anniversary on Feb. 7, 2004.

Artlets, headed by Dean Belen Tangco, is the result of the merger of the old Faculty of Philosophy and Letters (Philets) and the old College of Liberal Arts in 1964.

Call 731-4003 or 731-3102 loc. 8220 (Artlets); 713-6282 to 83 (Artlets Alumni Foundation); and 925-3117 or 921-2524 (Philets Alumni Foundation).

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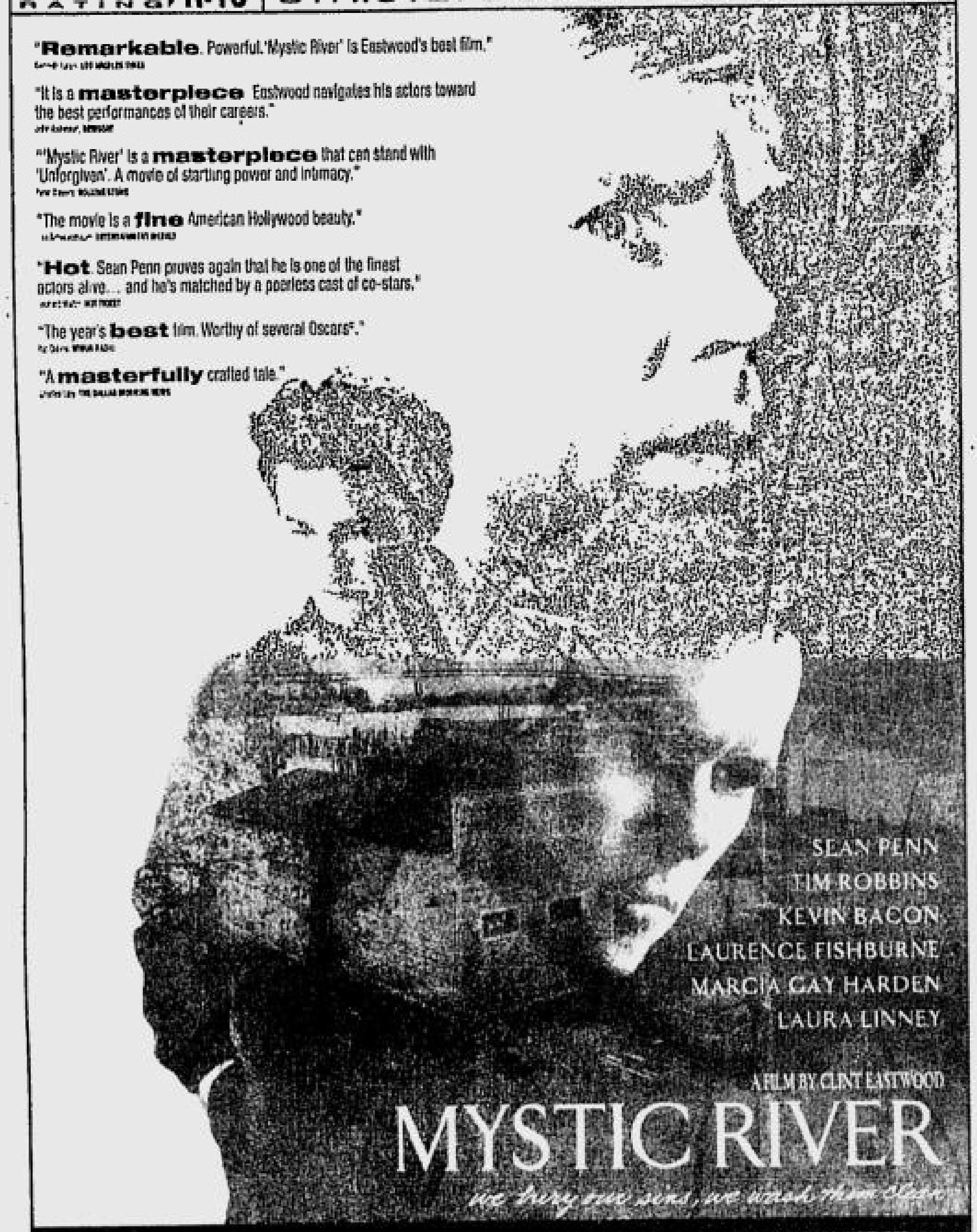
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www.mysticrivermovie.com

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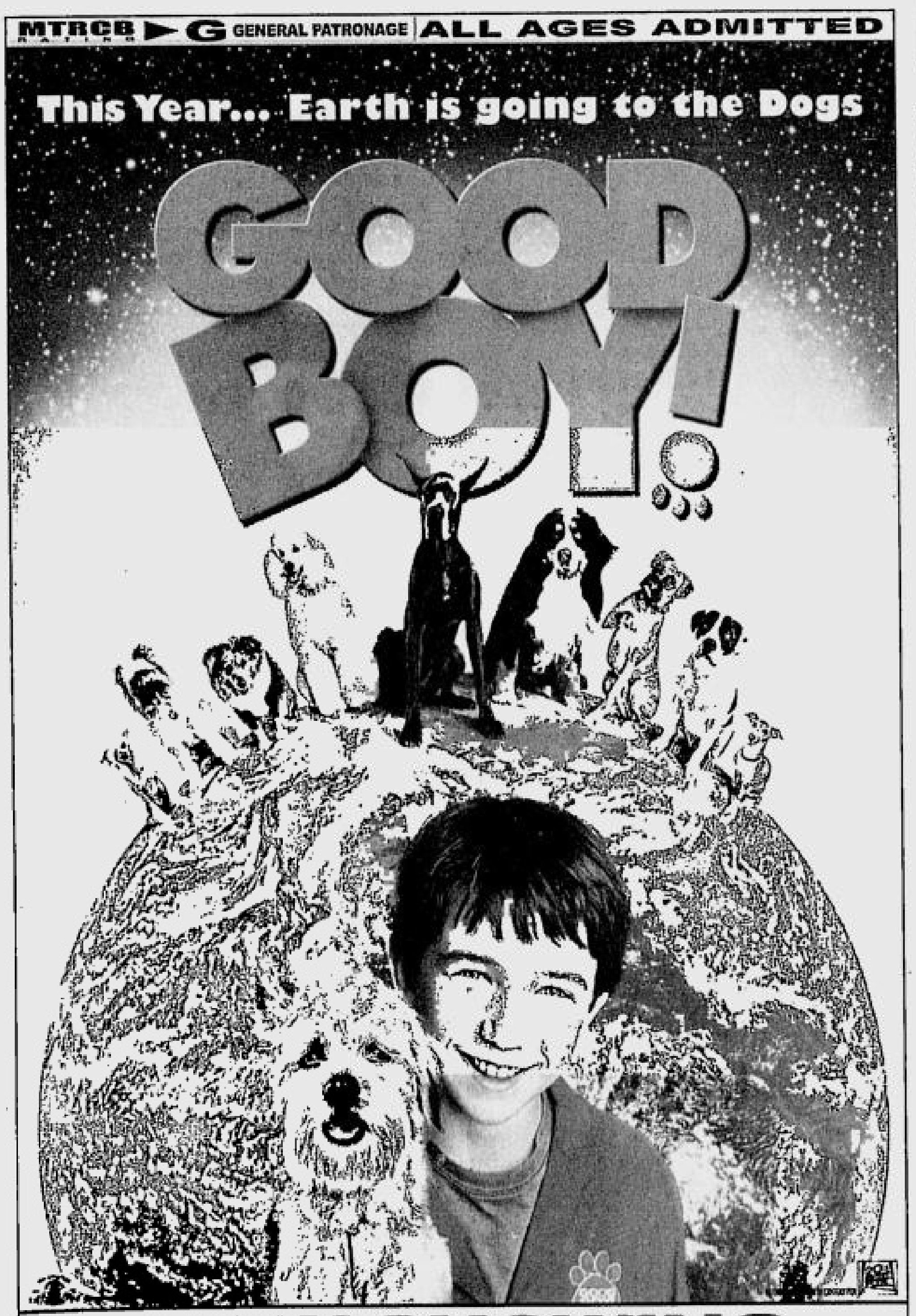
This Year... Earth is going to the Dogs



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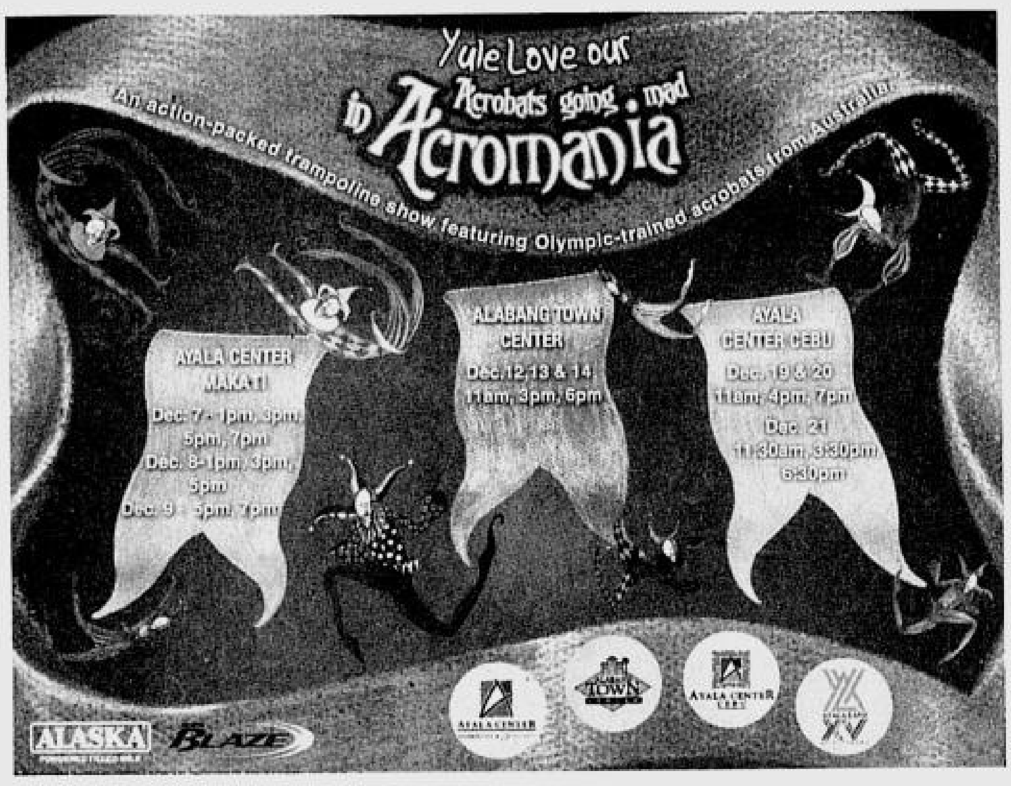
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An action-packed trampoline show featuring Olympic-trained acrobats from Australia
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Dec. 9 - 5pm, 7pm
ALABANG TOWN CENTER
Dec. 12, 13 & 14
11am, 3pm, 6pm
AYALA CENTER CEBU
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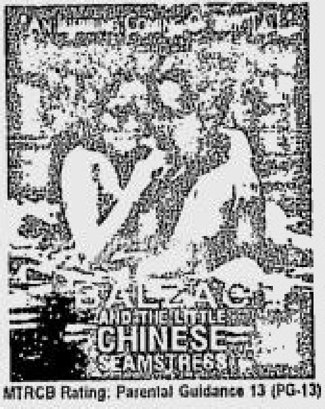
BALZAC AND THE LITTLE CHINESE SEAMSTRESS

MTRCB Rating: Parental Guidance 13 (PG-13)
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BEST FOREIGN FILM - 2003 GOLDEN GLOBE NOMINEE
BALZAC
AND THE LITTLE CHINESE
SEAMSTRESS
In China, in the early 70's during the dark years of the "Cultural Revolution", Ma and Luo, two teenagers considered as "bourgeois intellectuals" by the system, are sent to the small village of Sichuan in order to be "reeducated" into contact with the population. In this sinister period where the majority of books are prohibited and weddings before the age of 25 are illegal, Ma and Luo will clandestinely discover literature and love at the same time.
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ENTERTAINMENT

E-mail: pr_entertainment@inquirer.com.ph
Editor Louie C. Camino

TWO DAYS before he left, Soler said he'll return when things "get better." RICHARD CHEN

Bob Soler, disillusioned, leaves again

By Marinel R. Cruz

BOB Soler, the original Captain Barbell of Philippine movies, last month flew to the United States to live there for good.

Bob said he was disheartened by the unfortunate state of Philippine show business and was convinced that even the charm and powers of the fictional superhero that he portrayed in the '60s could not help improve it.

"I never imagined that Filipinos would find Taiwanese talents more charming than their own," Bob told INQUIRER Entertainment two days before he flew to Los Angeles, California, last Nov. 6. He was referring to Vanness Wu and Vic Zhuo, members of the wildly popular Taiwanese boy band F4, or Flower 4, who came to Manila last September to perform to a big crowd at the Ultra football field in Pasig.

"Captain Barbell" is a *komiks* character created by the late writer and publisher Mars Ravelo. Bob was the first actor to play the role of the Pinoy superhero as well as his alter ego, Enteng, in 1965.

"I was shocked when I found out how obsessed Filipinos are with these Taiwanese talents," he added. "I guess Filipinos today have no respect for their own. I myself was a victim of the same discrimination two years ago."

Charo busy

He recalled that in 2001, he went to the office of Charo Santos-Concio, ABS-CBN executive vice president for entertainment, to apply for an "acting job."

"Her secretary said Charo was busy and would give me a call," he said. "She never did."

THE ORIGINAL Captain Barbell

The former actor, now 66, said, "I was prepared to give her my resumé because I don't have an agent. But I was not given a chance."

Bob was an exclusive talent of the original Premiere Pictures, which produced the first "Captain Barbell" movie.

The next Captain Barbell movie had comedy king Dolphy play the title role. Edu reprised the role in the '80s, with Herbert Bautista as Enteng.

In the latest version, Ogie Alcasid is Enteng to Bong Revilla's Captain Barbell in the movie that is one of the entries in the the Metro Manila Film Festival which starts on Christmas Day.

1959 to 2002

Bob—Roberto Gutierrez in real life—said that in 1959, he was hanging out with friends when a talent scout spotted him, which led to Bob's signing a contract with Premiere Pictures.

Bob's first movie was Cirio Santiago's "Lo' Waist Gang" with Butch Bautista, Tony Cruz, Boy Francisco, Berting Labra, the late Zaldy Zornack and Fernando Poe Jr., now the presidential aspirant FPJ.

Bob's first starring role was opposite Cielito Legaspi in the comedy "Mr. Basketball." He was also Legaspi's love interest in "Asintado."

In the 1980s, Bob did "I Confess," with Christopher de Leon, Alma Moreno and Gina Alajar.

In the 1990s, he was in several FPJ movies like "Ikaw ang Mahal Ko" with Vilma Santos, "Eseng ng Tondo" with Ina Raymundo and "Ang Dalubhasa" with Nanette Medved.

Bob worked with "Pag Oras Mo, Oras Mo Na," with Philip Salvador and Sunshine Cruz in 2001.

When things improve

His last project was last year's bold movie "Masarap Ang Bawal" with Camille Roxas, Mike Magat and Pyar Mirasol.

The actor was married to Poe's sister Elizabeth. They have six children—Margardy, Penelope, Catherine, Eron, Robert Gregory and Marco—but they are now divorced.

He first went to California to live with daughter Catherine in 1981. He came back to Manila in 1991 and has been traveling back and forth since.

"I'm leaving this country and staying in the US for good," the actor said last month. "I'll come back when things get better in Philippine show biz. Then maybe I'll apply for an acting job again."

Bob said there is still hope for the entertainment industry, "but somebody has to initiate it" to keep that hope alive.

"MR. BASKETBALL" of the '60s in a '90s movie with John Regala

DID YOU KNOW...

IN last Sunday's episode of "Partners: Mel and Jay" on GMA 7, when host **Jay Sonza** introduced one of the guests, he said, "*May isa pa tayong kapamilya dito,*" then he paused. The camera showed co-host **Mel Tiangco** giving Jay a dagger look. "Kapamilya," as most everyone knows, is the popular word used by GMA 7's rival network, ABS-CBN. Jay immediately redeemed himself and said, "*Kapuso pala.*" The episode featured showbiz godparents and their godchildren, including Caridad Sanchez and Lotlot de Leon, Tirso Cruz III and Ryan Eigenmann.

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Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso

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In this issue

SPARKLE!

Guest editor Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

A holiday fashion and beauty special

/Sections G, H, I

Home is where the holiday heart is

/E1

Maurice Arcache gatecrashes Club Bulakeña ball

/J2

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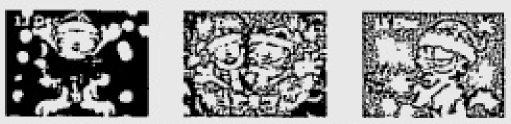

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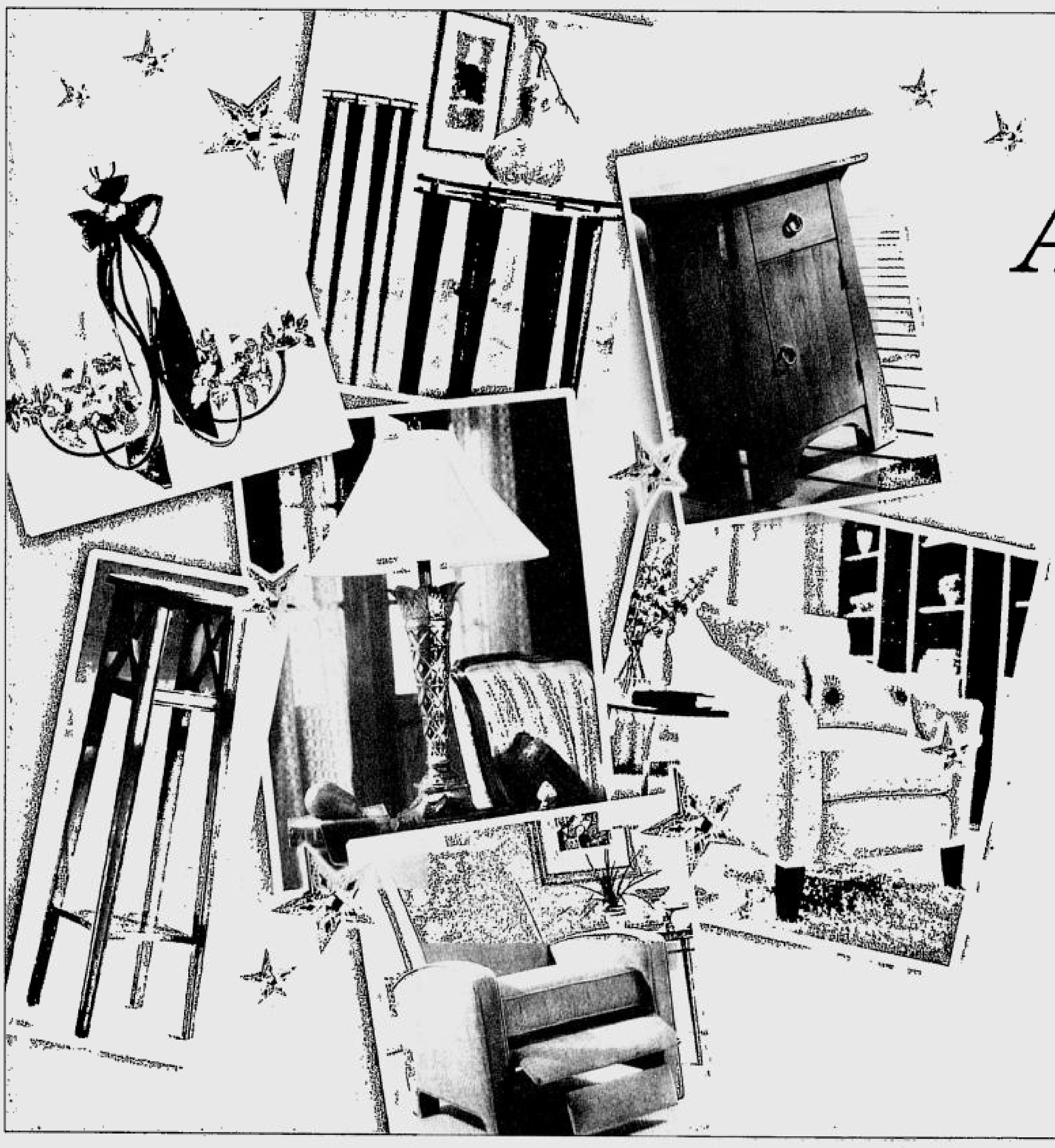
Accent on Christmas

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This Christmas, think accents. And who says accents only mean lamps and wall decors? Coffee tables, side tables, console tables and one-of-a-kind furniture pieces make wonderful home accents, too. Give them as gifts and you'll make this Christmas a truly memorable one for friends and loved ones.

ETHAN ALLEN
HOME INTERIORS

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Pantene launches a new product that liberates women from hair care woes

PANTENE girl Angel Aquino

TINA Palermo for Bayo

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Part tr

THE NIGHT sky over Eastwood Citywalk in Libis, QC sparkled in all shades of pink one recent night when Pantene unveiled its latest hair care product that promises to give women freedom from all hair worries.

The birth of the new Pantene Total Care Conditioner was cause for the celebration dubbed as the Pantene Freedom Party.

The night, which turned out to be more than just one big party, boasted of a heavy line-up of surprises. Arnee Hidalgo and the Akafellas provided the music for the crowd.

For the dance lovers, the Pantene Freedom Party Cheering Competition showcased routines from the San Sebastian Recoletos Pep Squad, the CCP Bobcats and the Mapua Cheering Cardinals, with the latter bagging the grand prize for their unbeatable choreography and stunts. The Company of Ateneo Dancers (CADS) also participated in a special opening number that brought the house down and sent the ball rolling for a truly tremendous show.

Pantene also catered to women's sensible vanities that night through its free hair and makeup consultation booths manned by its partner salons Bergmann Hair & More, Menage by Hair Impressions, Hairbytes Eastwood, The Fanny Serrano Salon and Salon de Orient.

To cap the night off, a grand fashion show featuring a bevy of Manila's top mannequins and student models sashayed down the ramp, showing off various hairstyles crafted by salon geniuses around the metro. Levi's and the Fanny Serrano Salon teamed up to create funky twisted tresses to go with the brand's cutting-edge denim styles. Bergmann Hair & More presented colored hairstyles to highlight the Asian-inspired collection of Sari-Sari. Freeway's sporty-glam outfit complemented the curled looks by Salon de Orient. Mod styles were creatively interpreted by Salon de Manila and U! by Rustan's black and white ensembles, and the classic elegance of Bayo apparel perfectly fit Hairbytes Eastwood's timeless hair-down fashion.

Pantene endorser Angel Aquino ended the fashion show with a call to the crowd to step up to a new level of conditioning and switch to the new Pantene Total Care Condi-

LADIES take advantage of the free makeup and hairst

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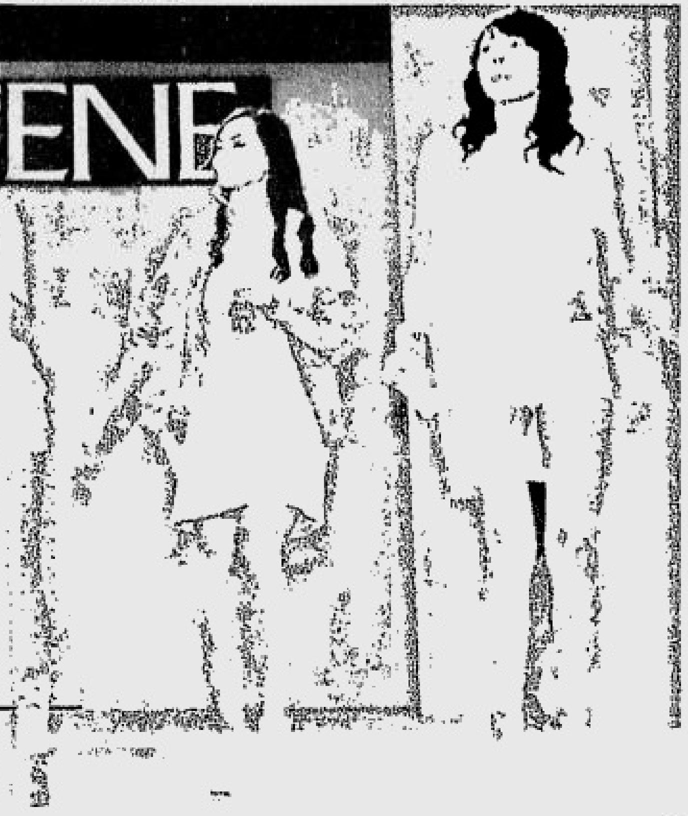


paz for Freeway

FRANCESCA Brinas and Raphael Kiefer for U! by Rustan's

PROCTER & Gamble Distributing Inc. assistant marketing manager Mai-Mai Madrid

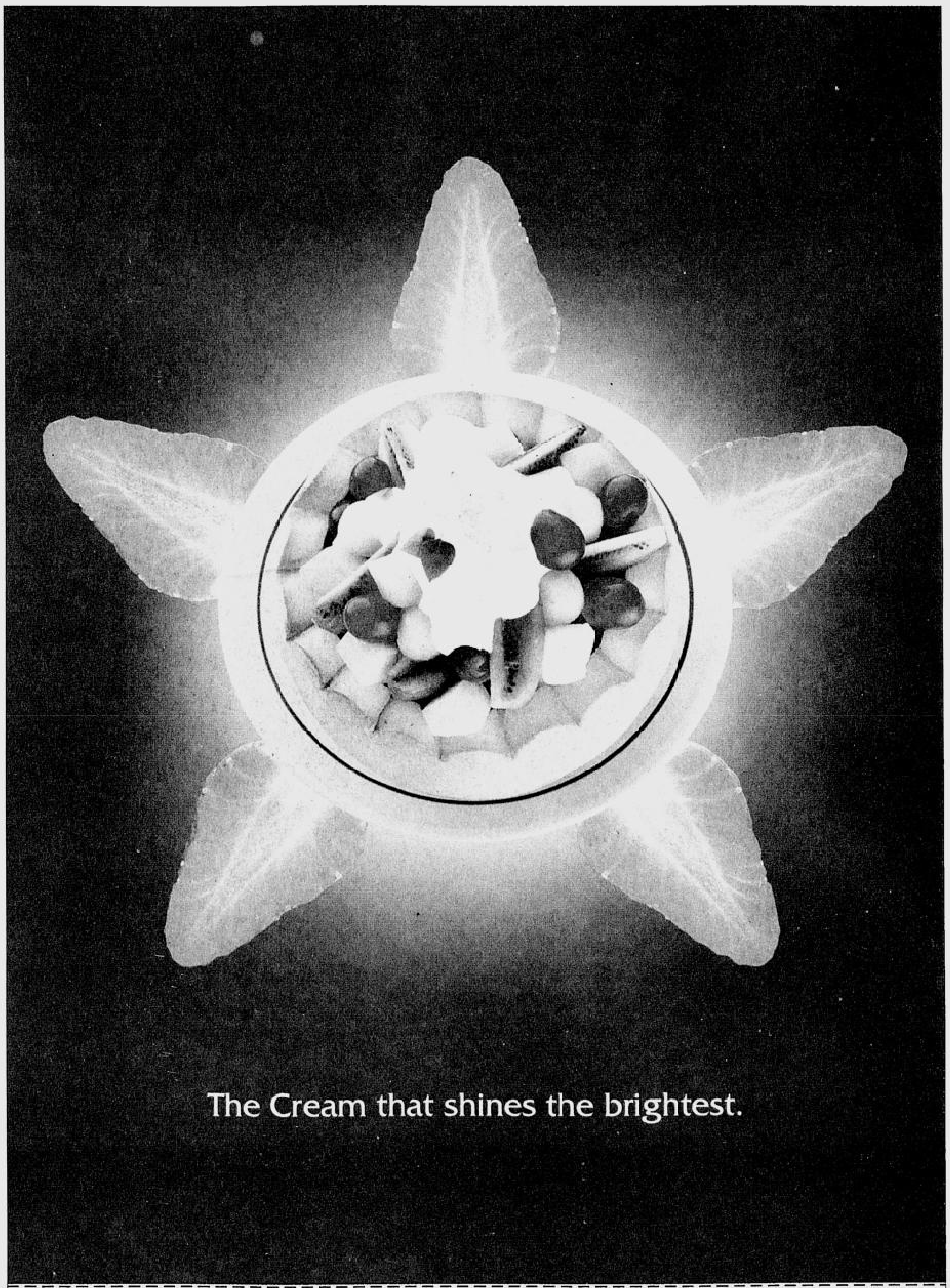
y esses

COREY Wills and Justin Jabionza for Levi's

tioner to protect hair from sun exposure, coloring, perming, straightening, and all other hair-unfriendly chemical treatments.

And true to its promise of an all-night, all-out freedom party, the Pantene Freedom Crew, led by prolific TV host Shaan Bermudez, raided Blue Onion, Amoeba and Basement Bars and partied some more. Erg drinks overflowed till the wee hours in a long celebration of women's new-found hair freedom.

yling services at the Pantene Salon Station Booth.



Melon Cream Boat

1	*whole honeydew melon*
2	*med. ripe mangoes, sliced*
3	*pcs. kiwis, peeled and cut into wedges*
1-1/4	*cup (approx. 200g) seedless grapes*
2	*tbsp. confectioners' sugar*
1	*170g. can* **NESTLÉ Cream**
	chilled juice of 1 orange
	thin strips of orange zest, for garnish

Cut off about 2 inches of the stem end of the melon; discard the seeds and scoop out the flesh into small balls and place in a bowl. Add the mangoes, kiwis and grapes to the melon balls. Refrigerate.

Sift sugar on top and then sprinkle with orange juice. Spoon the mixture into the melon boat. Pour chilled **NESTLÉ Cream** on top. Garnish with orange zest. Serve immediately. Makes 6 servings.

Note: Cantaloupe may be used in place of honeydew melon.

Nestlé
cream

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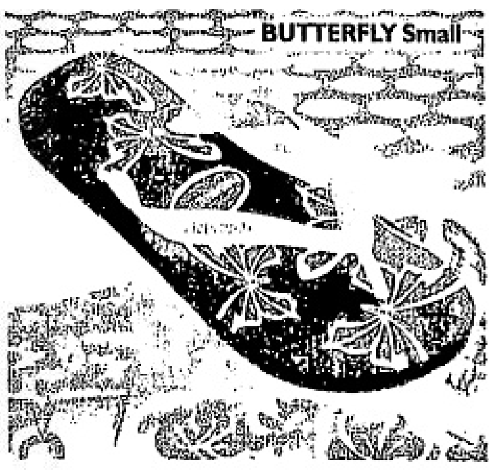
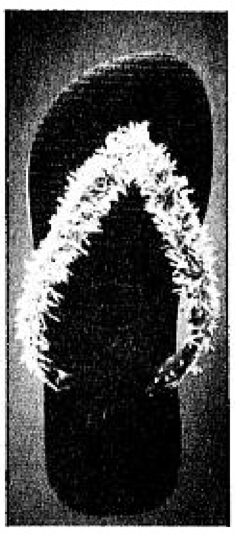


BUTTERFLY Small

Fancy flip-flops for fashion fanatics

ULTRA comfortable flip-flops adorned with gold and diamonds were recently launched here as a result of a brilliant partnership between two famous Brazilian brands, Havaianas flip-flops and H. Stern jewelry. Both brands known for their exceptional quality and unique designs created limited-edition flip-flops that are exclusively available in H. Stern stores with a price tag of $1,700 to $22,000.

For those looking to buy a pair of Havaianas—the best rubber flip-flops in the world, at more pocket-friendly prices, regular versions of the flip-flops in fun and fashionable designs are locally available and retail at P600 to P1,000 only. For a complete listing of stores, call 0916-8320409.



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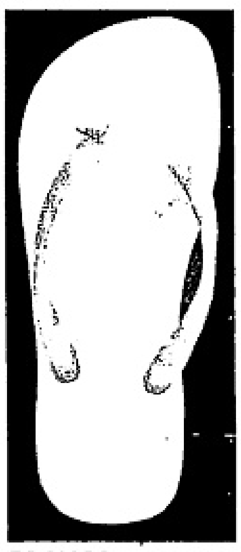

BRANCA

Alumni homecoming

GOINGS ON

REUNION. Caloocan High School Class 1970 will hold an Alumni Homecoming/Reunion on Jan. 10, 2004, 5 p.m., at Chi Yu Seafood Restaurant at 10th Avenue East, Caloocan City. The affair promises to be a delightful one, with *balikbayan* alumni from US, Canada and Australia, batch mates from all over the Philippines, and former teachers attending the homecoming. Call 0919-3523169, 9298877, 0918-9330907 or 0916-9414895. Tickets may be obtained at the reception area on the day of the reunion.

WORKSHOP. The Federation of Philippine Photographers Foundation will hold a photo workshop during Photoworld Manila 2004 on Feb. 25-March 1 at Glorietta, Ayala Center, Makati. Call 8435341, 8137420.

CLASSES. The Nihongo Center Foundation is now accepting applications for Japanese language classes for the first semester, January to June 2004. Call 7353179, 8924916 to 19.

WORKSHOP. The Mandy Navasero photo workshop offers a three-day session on digital photography every month: Dec. 13, 14 and 20; Jan. 10, 17 and 24, 2004; Feb. 7, 21 and 22, 2004; March 6, 13 and 20, 2004, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Call 5225185, 8991767, 8963208 or e-mail mandynavaseropro@yahoo.com.

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Home

CHRISTMAS stockings will be bulging with gifts 13 days from now.

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mall tour

December 12

SM SUPERCENTER BUCAT

4pm
Center Atrium

Home is where the holiday heart is

Text by Alex Y. Vergara
Photos by Chito Vecina

IT'S easy to see why the Tañadas' home is a favorite party venue of their friends and relatives. Nestled in the lush hills of Antipolo, Rizal, the three-story structure with a sprawling garden is a sanctuary far removed from Metro Manila's noise and pollution.

Huge bay windows in the living room open out to a garden dotted with trees that extend to the streets and vacant lots beyond. Sliding windows in the attic provide a partial view of Metro Manila. The best seats in the house, however, are found on the asphalt-shingled roof. Whenever the couple is feeling romantic or adventurous, they need only climb here to get a more sweeping view of the stars above and city lights below.

"My family and I were drawn to the place's serenity and lush greenery when we decided to move here seven years ago," says Faye, the wife. "It's like living in a rainforest where geckos, snakes, monitor lizards, kingfishers and blue jays thrive. I hope it stays that way in the years and decades to come."

It also doesn't take a genius to know what the family's favorite color is. Shingles, window frames, throw pillows, table clothes and even the master bedroom's walls mimic the forest-green hue of nature. A dash of red and gold is all that's needed to usher in the Christmas spirit.

We're exaggerating, of course. The Tañadas obviously put in a lot of work to come up with a home festooned with candles, plates, table napkins and various accent pieces that remind us of

HOME/ E2

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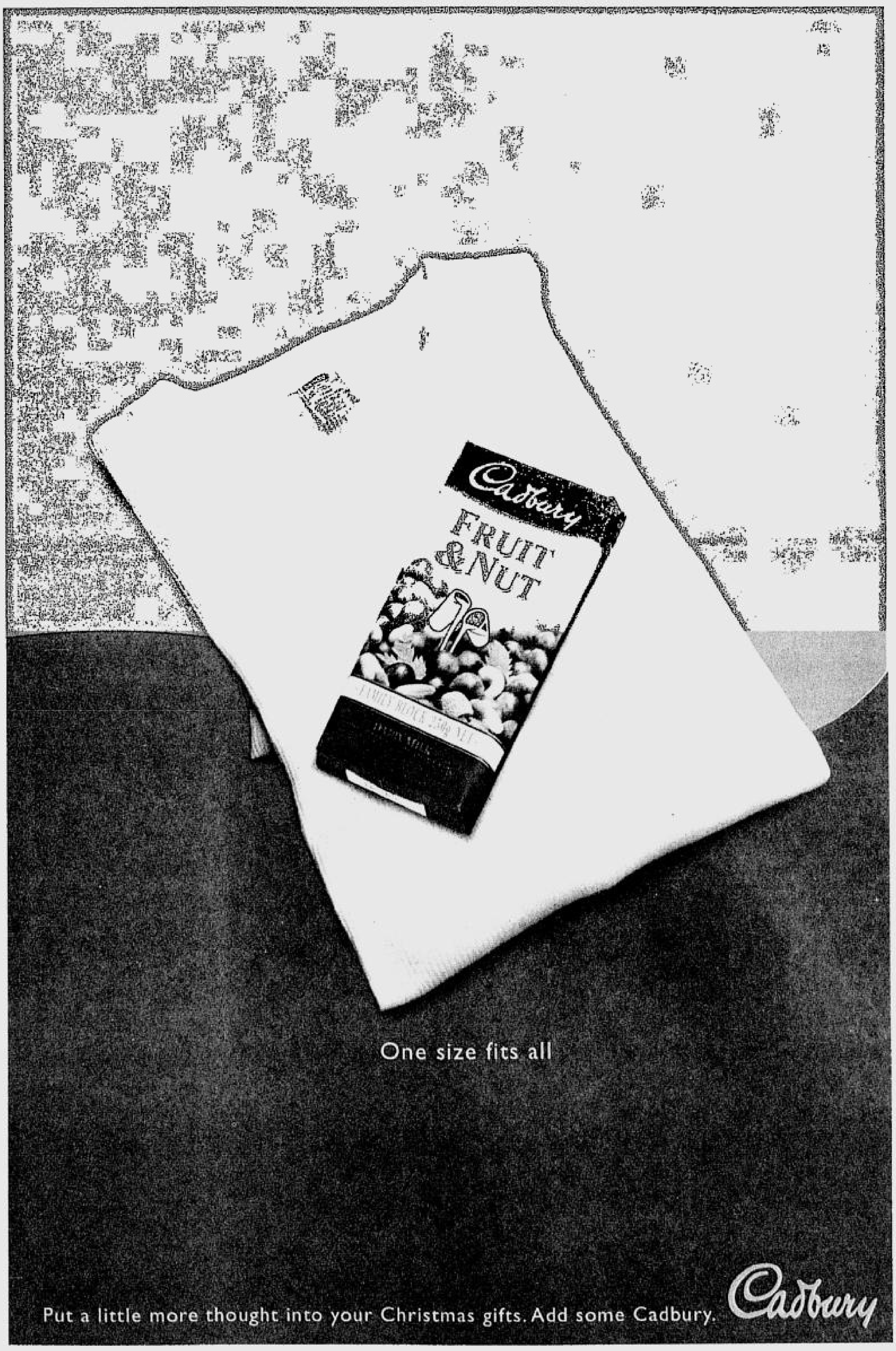

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A MINIATURE Christmas village that the rest of the community can see from the street through the front window

ASSORTED holiday décor

YULETIDE carols

PAPER angels on high

THE WARMTH and color of Christmas

Home is where . . .

From page E1

the coming holidays. Even the powder room wasn't spared, as Faye has spruced it up with Yuletide-inspired trimmings—from towels to soap dishes, door trimmings to wall accents.

She takes pride in her collection of Christmas-inspired plates and table accents, and she credits her daughters for helping her arrange the table and fashion napkin rings from faux poinsettias and hollies.

"This is a movable object," she says as she points to the 8 ft-tall Christmas tree in the living room. "That's one of the reasons why I did away with permanent sitting areas by the bay window. I wanted the entire space to be as flexible as possible."

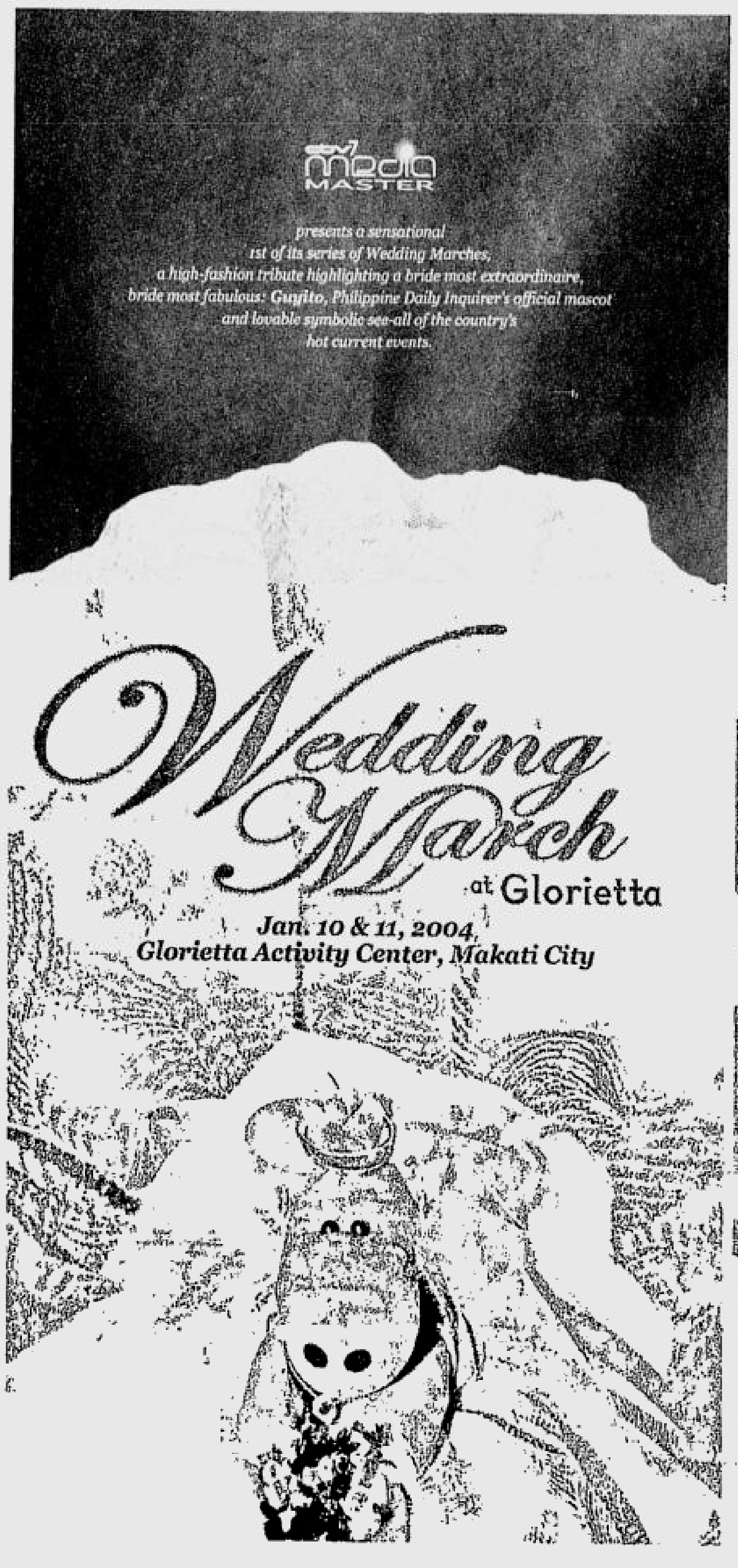
In lieu of a sitting area, for instance, a white, foam-covered table that features a miniature Christmas village sits by the bay window. Once lit up, the Christmas village can be seen from the street below.

Thanksgiving, Pinoy style

The Christmas season officially started in the Tañada home a month ago when Faye hosted a party for members of her bible-study group. Two weeks later, members of the family feasted on turkey as they held their own version of Thanksgiving.

It has been like this

HOME/ E3



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presents a sensational
1st of its series of Wedding Marches,
a high-fashion tribute highlighting a bride most extraordinaire,
bride most fabulous: Guyito, Philippine Daily Inquirer's official mascot
and lovable symbolic see-all of the country's
hot current events.

Wedding March at Glorietta

Jan. 10 & 11, 2004,
Glorietta Activity Center, Makati City

FEATURING

- On Exhibit
  Guyito in Haute Couture bridal gowns by 10 of the Philippines' top fashion designers: Ben Farrales, Inno Sotto, Patis Tesoro, Eddie Baddeo, Rhett Eala, Rajo Laurel, Frederick Peralta, Jojie Lloren, Bobby Novenario and Eric Pineda
- Dress-Up Guyito Wedding March Contest
  In cooperation with Philippine Daily Inquirer, one of the major attractions of this event is this competition to dress up Guyito, PDI's official mascot. Please see contest mechanics below.
- Accoustic Night
  A free concert featuring: Jimmy Bondoc, Paolo Santos, Nyoy Volante and Nina
- Raffle Draws
  Open to suppliers/exhibitors and couples/guests
- Wedding & Trade Fair Exhibit
  Showcasing the country's most prominent establishments

Dress Up Guyito Wedding March
Contest Mechanics:

1. The contest is open to all aspiring amateur designers 18 years old and above.
2. One pair of Guyito doll entitles a contestant to one entry form. The dolls must be purchased by the contestant starting Dec. 1 to Dec. 26, 2003 from the Philippine Daily Inquirer main office at:
   Philippine Daily Inquirer Building
   Don Chino Roces Avenue
   cor. Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
   Each pair costs P350.00. A contestant may submit as many entries as he/she wants.
3. The contest theme is "Guyito's Wedding March". A contestant is tasked to dress up the doll pair in wedding ensembles (as bride and groom) of his/her own design. No perimeters shall be set with the design.
4. Criteria for judging will be based on the following: Relevance to Theme (30%), Originality (30%) and Creativity (40%). Officers from Philippine Daily Inquirer and cbv7 Media Master will be present during the judging of the contest.
5. Deadline for submission of entries is on Dec. 29, 2003, 9am to 6pm at the Philippine Daily Inquirer Head Office Marketing Department. Look for Hazel Soriaga and Mimay Cabahat.
6. Judging date will be on January 5, 2004 at Philippine Daily Inquirer main office in Don Chino Roces Avenue (formerly Pasong Tamo), corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City at 2pm. A DTI representative shall be invited to witness the selection of the winners.
7. Winners will be notified thru phone, registered mail and will also be published in Philippine Daily Inquirer.
8. All winning entries shall automatically become the exclusive property of PDI and may be used, copied, reproduced into any size or medium for exhibition, advertising, promotion, or similar purposes. All non-winning entries will be returned to the contestants after the awarding ceremonies.
9. PDI reserves and maintains all intellectual property rights.
10. Prizes as follows:
    1st prize : P15,000 cash
    2nd prize : P10,000 cash
    3rd prize : P5,000 cash
    All cash prizes are tax free.
11. All winning entries will be displayed during the Wedding March at Glorietta in Makati City on Jan. 10, 2004. Awarding will be done on Jan. 10, 2004 at 7pm. Officers from Philippine Daily Inquirer and cbv7 Media Master will be present during the awarding.
12. Winners must present any valid I.D. (driver's license, passport, or any I.D. with picture) when claiming the prize.
13. The decision of the Board of Judges of the Dress Up Guyito Wedding March Contest is final and unappealable with the concurrence of the DTI.
14. Employees of PDI, cbv7 Media Master, their advertising agency, dealers, all participating outlets and their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining this promotion.
15. Only entries received until Dec. 29, 2003 are qualified for the contest. A participant can send more than one entry but can only win once.
16. PDI and cbv7 Media Master reserve the right to publish or display any entry, winning or non-winning, for promotional purposes, without permission or payment of any kind to the owner of the Guyito doll.

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. AI-641, Series of 2003

Event Stylist: Ruchy Cuna

COMING BACK SOON

RETURN

REG.

KEEP

ALL-AROUND ceramic pitchers and kettle for the most-awaited season

CHRISTMAS mugs go well with hot chocolate.

BATHROOM basics get a holiday makeover.

Home . . .

From page E2

every two weeks or so as the family has been hosting one party after another. Tomorrow, it will be the husband Robbie's turn as he hosts a Christmas party for his close friends at the office.

It's a good thing Faye has had plenty of training as a former caterer. Her food business springs back to life every Christmas season as she whips up specially made pâtés, sauces and sandwich spreads for the holiday table.

"It's not that big an effort for me to hold parties," she says. "I have the logistics and the know-how to feed anywhere from six to 150 people. My helpers are also well-trained."

The family spends Christmas eve dinners with Robbie's siblings and their families. Dinners are usually formal affairs as families sit down and sample each other's time-tested recipes.

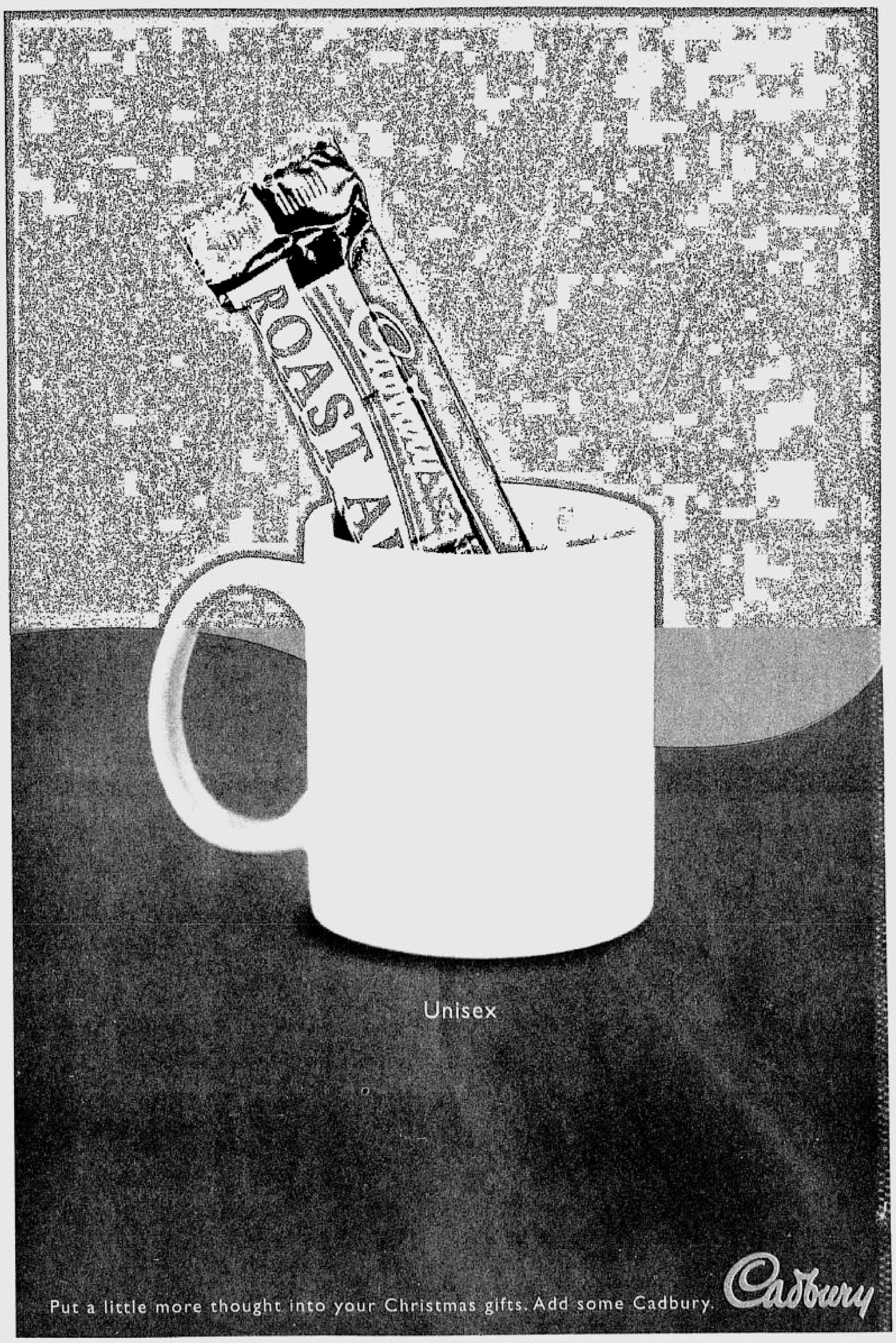
MERRY trimmings bid visitors welcome.

Robbie is the nephew of former senator Bobby Tañada. He also traces his roots to the Nakpil clan, which explains the presence of such heirloom pieces as Juan Nakpil's paintings, Julio Nakpil's violin, an antique grandfather's clock and several other remnants of the past in the house.

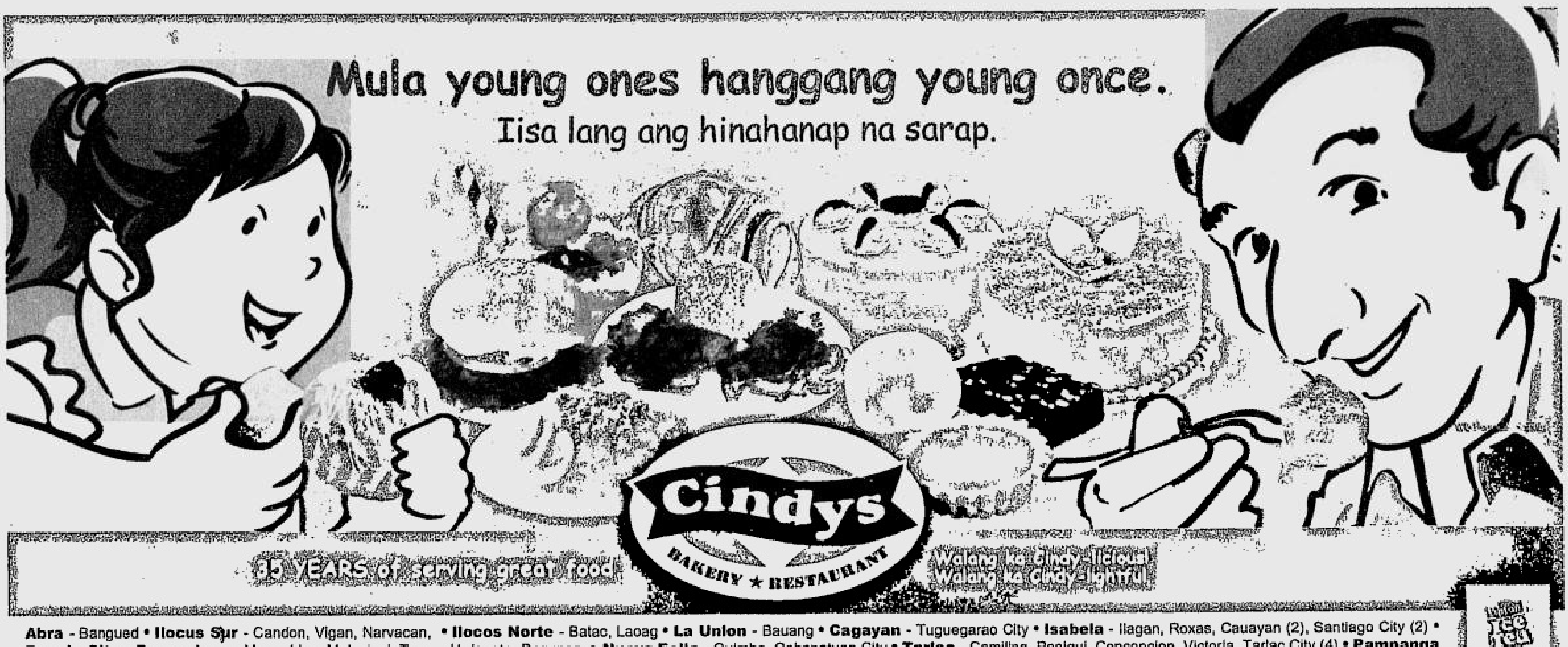
It's the other way around come Christmas day as the Tañadas spend lunch with Faye's clan, the Zorrillas. Both parties have mov-

HOME/ E4

TEA set from one of Faye's Yuletide collections



ROAST ALMOND
Unisex
Put a little more thought into your Christmas gifts. Add some Cadbury.
Cadbury



Mula young ones hanggang young once.
Iisa lang ang hinahanap na sarap.
35 YEARS of serving great food
Cindys
BAKERY ★ RESTAURANT
Walang ka Cindy-licious!
Walang ka Cindy-lightful
Ice Tea

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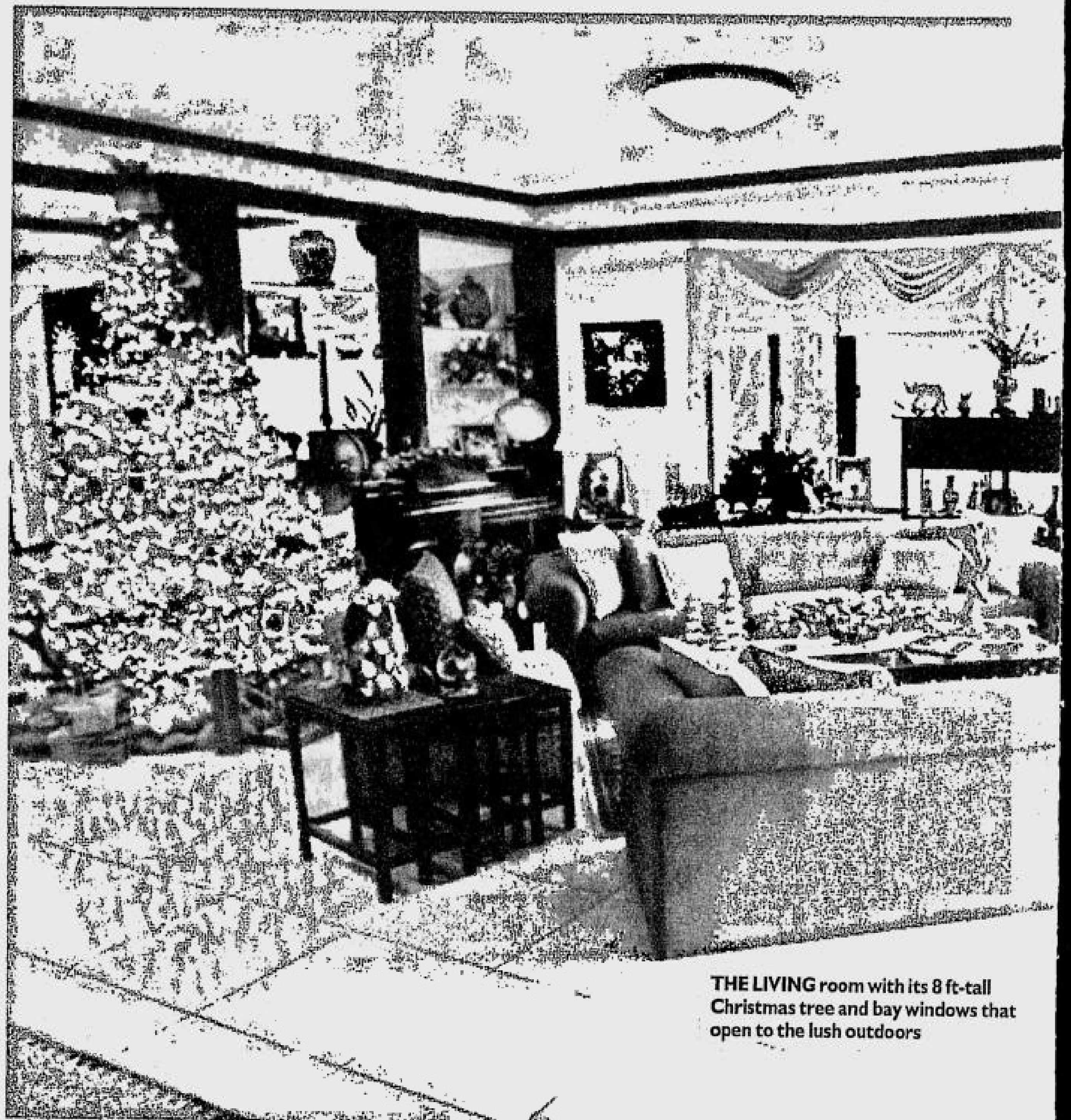
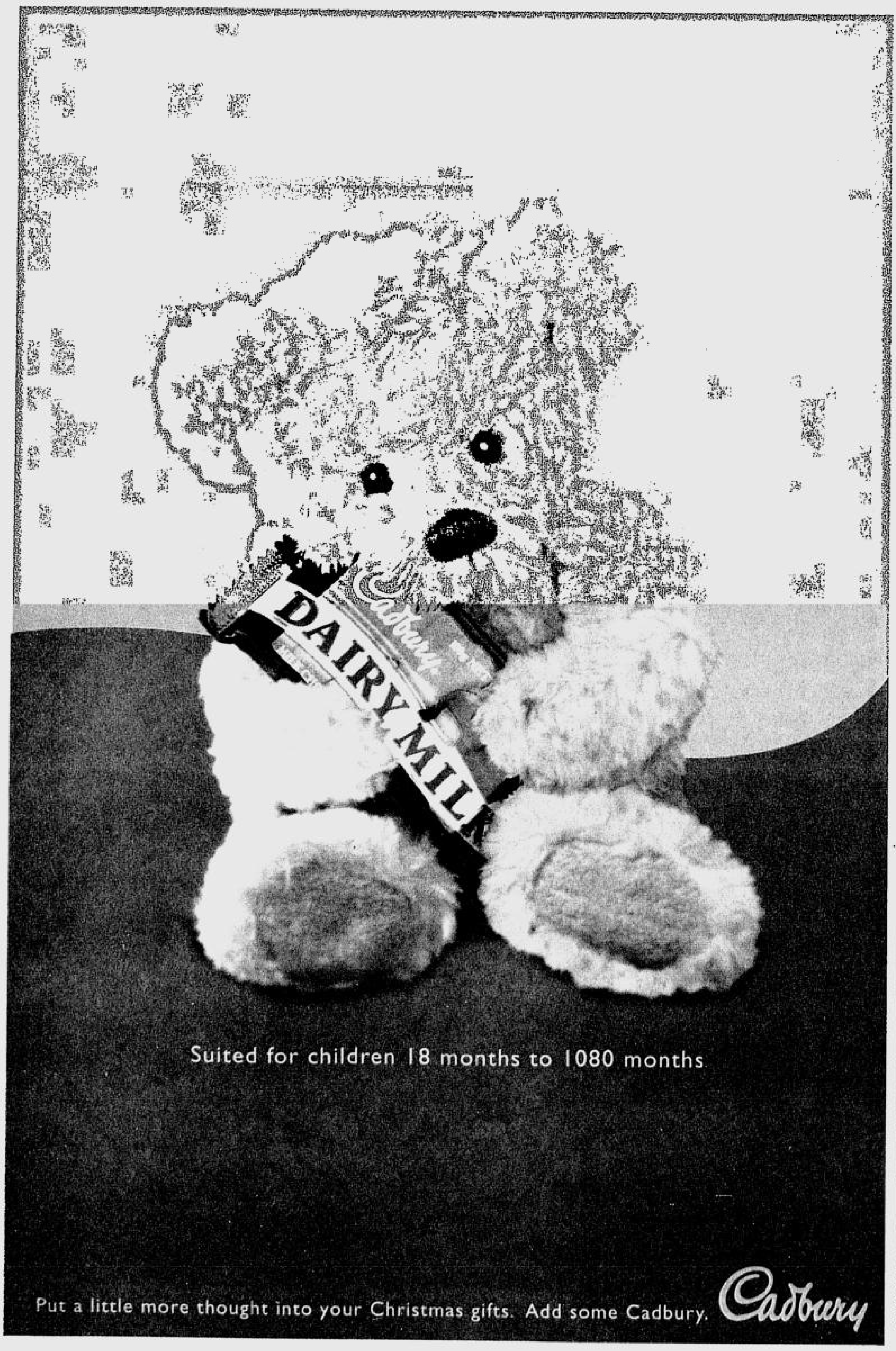
TRADITIONAL table setting in red, green and gold



THE LIVING room with its 8 ft-tall Christmas tree and bay windows that open to the lush outdoors

Home is where th



Cadbury
DAIRY MILK
Suited for children 18 months to 1080 months
Put a little more thought into your Christmas gifts. Add some Cadbury.
Cadbury

From page E3

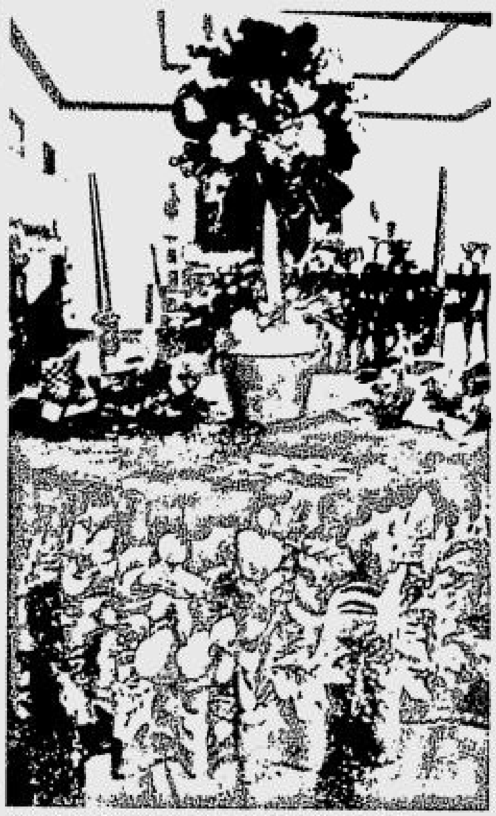
able venues as families take turns hosting them. The Tañadas won't be hosting any such parties this year.

Faye already has a menu in mind if they were to host a big affair this Christmas: cream of squash soup, baked fish in white wine and olive oil, and roasted leg of lamb with roasted green and red bell peppers, potatoes and rice pilaf.

For dessert, she can whip up a cold bowl of mango bango, a refreshing salad consisting of fresh mangoes in cream and sago.

But whatever dishes she finally decides to serve guests, one thing is certain about the Tañada home. Despite the traffic leading to the village's gates, the place and the food are always worth the trip.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph



ACCENT table is all dressed up for the holidays.

THE NATIVITY scene in rich golden hues

THE TAÑADAS: Robbie and F

FAYE'S nerve ce
a.k.a. her kit

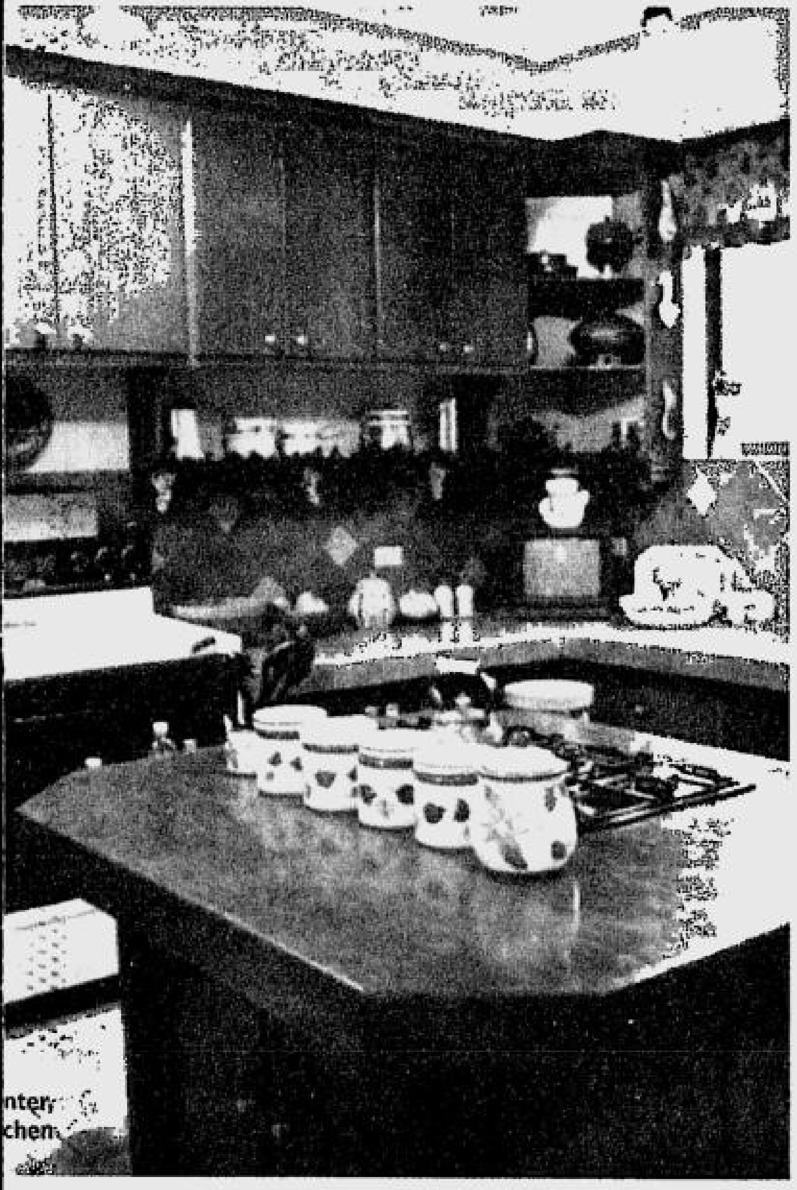
BEST COPY AVAILABLE

One thing is certain about the Tañada home in faraway Antipolo: the place and the food are always worth the trip

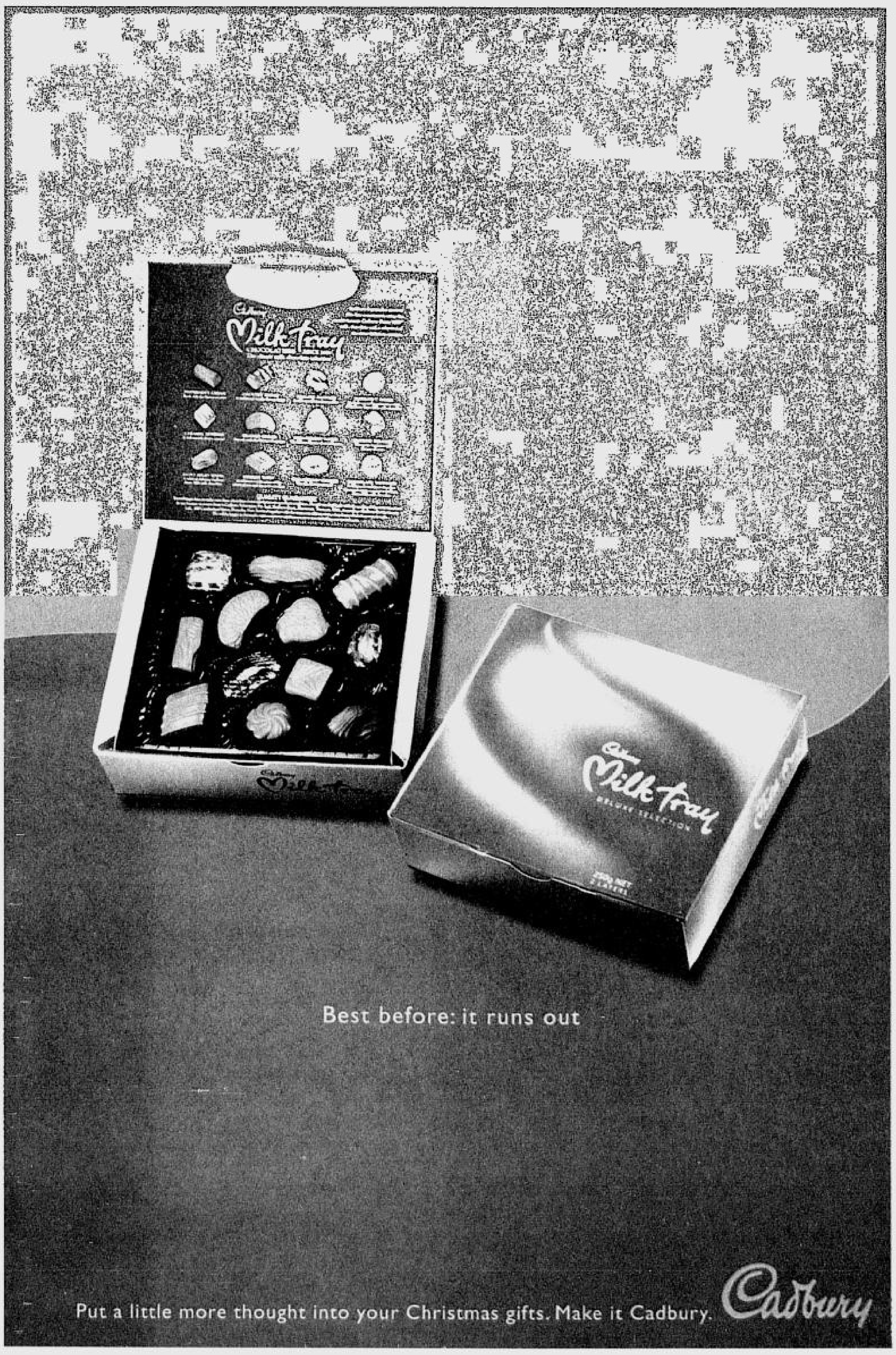
Bagong-lutong sarap
sa bagong
junior size, junior price.
Arroz Caldo
WITH CHICKEN MEATBALLS
P25
lang

e holiday heart is

ye with children Tanya, Angela, Natasha and Carlo



nter,
chen


Milk Tray
Milk Tray
Best before: it runs out
Put a little more thought into your Christmas gifts. Make it Cadbury.
Cadbury

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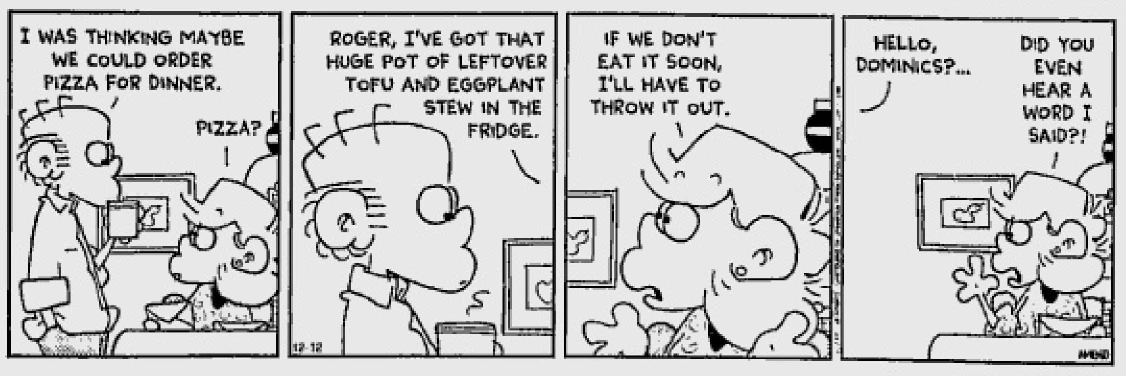
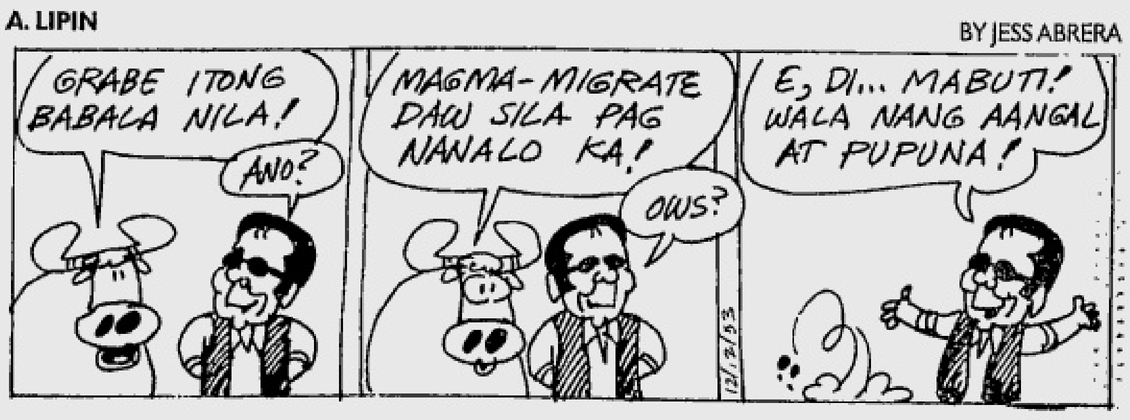
FOXTROT

BY BILL AMEND


I WAS THINKING MAYBE WE COULD ORDER PIZZA FOR DINNER.
PIZZA?
ROGER, I'VE GOT THAT HUGE POT OF LEFTOVER TOFU AND EGGPLANT STEW IN THE FRIDGE.
12-12
IF WE DON'T EAT IT SOON, I'LL HAVE TO THROW IT OUT.
HELLO, DOMINICS?...
DID YOU EVEN HEAR A WORD I SAID?!
AMEND

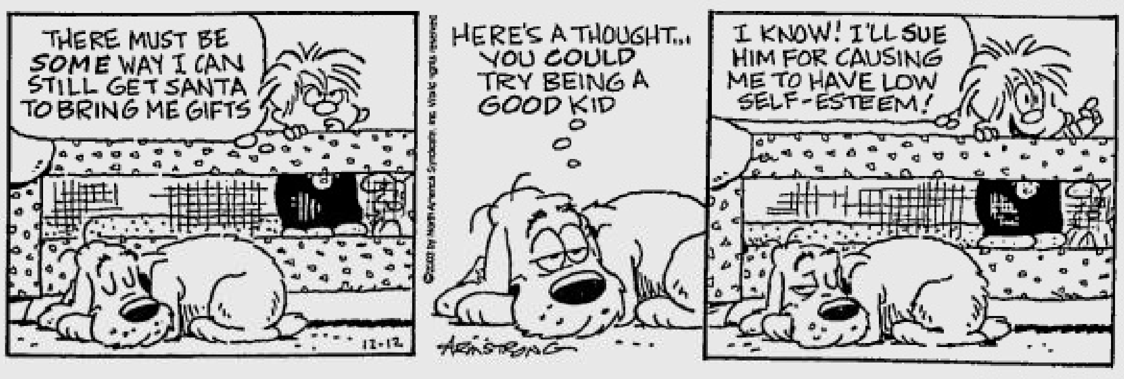
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


GRABE ITONG BABALA NILA!
ANO?
MAGMA-MIGRATE DAW SILA PAG NANALO KA!
OWS?
12/12/03
E, DI... MABUTI! WALA NANG AANGAL AT PUPUNA!

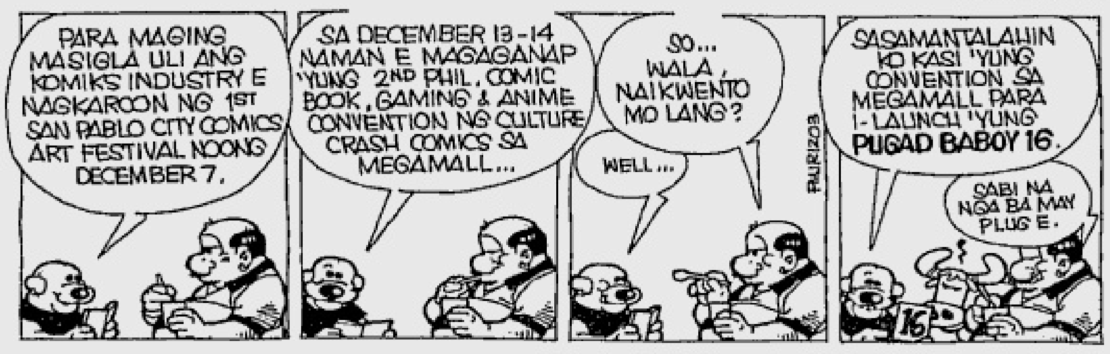
MARVIN

BY TOM ARMSTRONG


THERE MUST BE SOME WAY I CAN STILL GET SANTA TO BRING ME GIFTS
HERE'S A THOUGHT... YOU COULD TRY BEING A GOOD KID
12-12
ARMSTRONG
I KNOW! I'LL SUE HIM FOR CAUSING ME TO HAVE LOW SELF-ESTEEM!

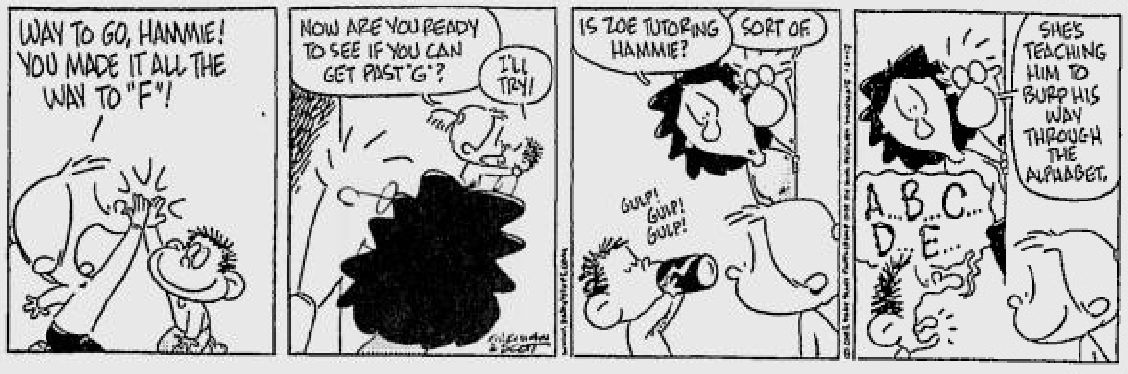
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


PARA MAGING MASIGLA ULI ANG KOMIKS INDUSTRY E NAGKAROON NG 1ST SAN PABLO CITY COMICS ART FESTIVAL NOONG DECEMBER 7.
SA DECEMBER 13-14 NAMAN E MAGAGANAP 'YUNG 2ND PHIL. COMIC BOOK, GAMING & ANIME CONVENTION NG CULTURE CRASH COMICS SA MEGAMALL...
SO... WALA, NAIKWENTO MO LANG?
WELL...
PAURI203
SASAMANTALAHIN KO KASI 'YUNG CONVENTION SA MEGAMALL PARA I-LAUNCH 'YUNG PUGAD BABOY 16.
SABI NA NGA BA MAY PLUG E.
16

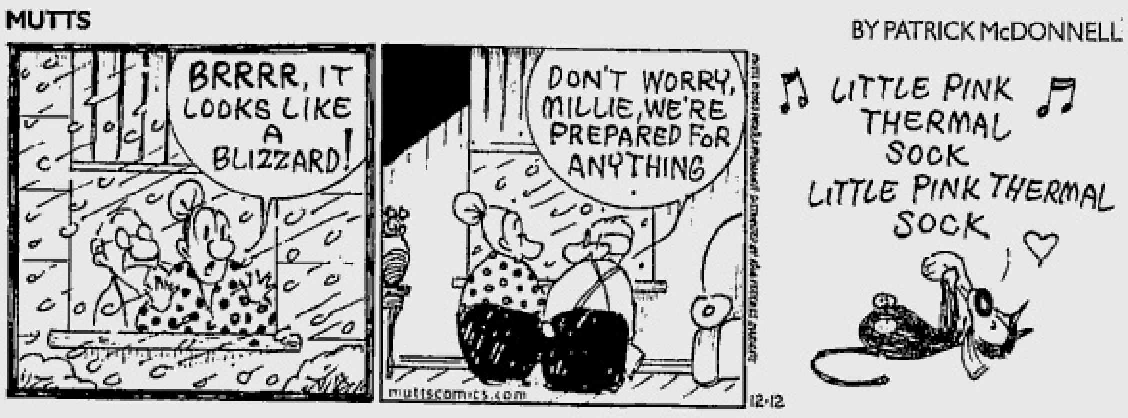
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WAY TO GO, HAMMIE! YOU MADE IT ALL THE WAY TO "F"!
NOW ARE YOU READY TO SEE IF YOU CAN GET PAST "G"?
I'LL TRY!
IS ZOE TUTORING HAMMIE?
SORT OF.
GULP! GULP! GULP!
SHE'S TEACHING HIM TO BURP HIS WAY THROUGH THE ALPHABET.
A..B..C.. D..E...

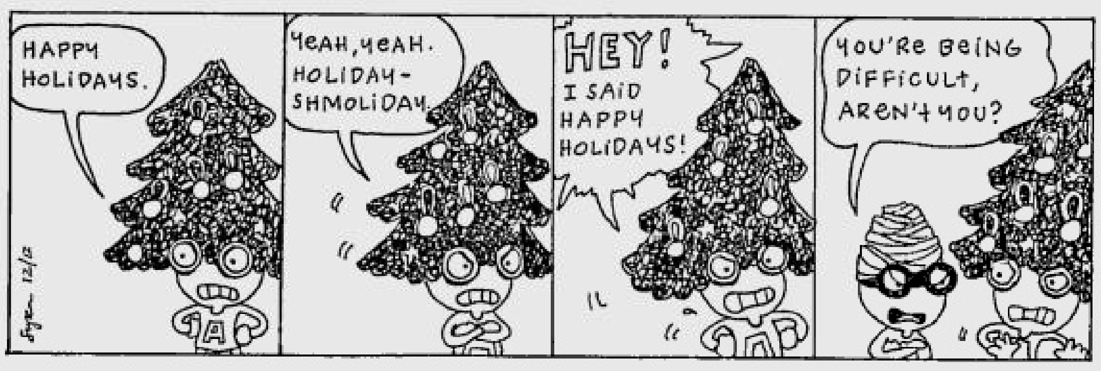
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


BRRRR, IT LOOKS LIKE A BLIZZARD!
DON'T WORRY, MILLIE, WE'RE PREPARED FOR ANYTHING
muttscomics.com
12-12
♫ LITTLE PINK THERMAL SOCK LITTLE PINK THERMAL SOCK ♫

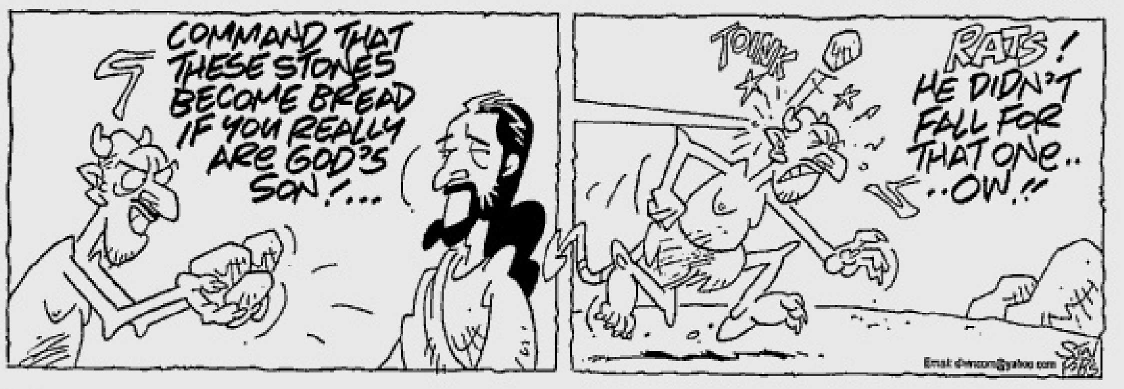
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


HAPPY HOLIDAYS.
YEAH, YEAH. HOLIDAY-SHMOLIDAY.
HEY! I SAID HAPPY HOLIDAYS!
YOU'RE BEING DIFFICULT, AREN'T YOU?
12/12
A

DIVINE COMEDY

BY STEVEN PABALINAS


COMMAND THAT THESE STONES BECOME BREAD IF YOU REALLY ARE GOD'S SON!...
TOINK
RATS! HE DIDN'T FALL FOR THAT ONE.. ..OW.!!

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are physically expressive, and you can read the body language of others. You are charming and big-hearted. You know how to perform and how to present well. Because of this, others admire you. You have a distinctive voice. In some ways, the year ahead is a fork in the road—and you must choose. **Birthdate of:** Frank Sinatra, singer/actor; Edward G. Robinson, actor; Grover Washington Jr., jazz saxophonist/composer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): You might meet a teacher or powerful person who actually changes your belief system. Someone will certainly influence you today.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Use whatever resources are available to you to clean up your environment, both at home and at work. Get rid of mess, debt, garbage and things that are broken and no longer useful.

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You might have to contend with somebody who is trying to exert unreasonable pressure or power over you today. You feel forced to defend yourself.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You will probably have to make repairs to something on the job today. It will be worth your effort, however, because the results will be superior to what it was before.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You might fall in love today—passionately, obsessively and compulsively. It's unlikely, but this is a Hollywood kind of day where that could happen.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Dig in and get rid of garbage and old items you no longer need at home. Clean house, and clear up anything that is disordered and confused.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): You have the power to convince practically anyone of anything today. (Did you know that the sign of Libra rules the legal profession?)

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You might spend money on tools or cleaning equipment today. You want to use your money to make improvements. Similarly, you might even make improvements to the way you earn money.

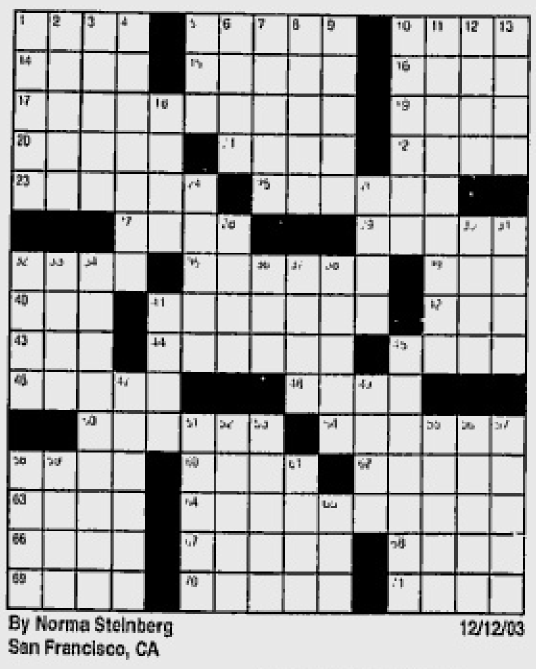
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Suddenly, you want to get in better shape. (Your sign rules the thighs, the largest muscle in the human body.) You like to be active and healthy. (Healthy body, healthy mind.)

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): At a deep level, you're concerned with the cycles of growth, evolution, decay, death, birth and regeneration. You're thinking about profound subjects today.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): You might meet somebody who represents hidden elements of change or decay today. This person could be someone who lives on the street, someone suffering in poverty or perhaps a criminal.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Avoid overbearing bosses and authority figures today. This is the kind of day where these kinds of people really throw their weight around trying to change the world.

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Norma Steinberg
San Francisco, CA

12/12/03

ACROSS

1 Brought to mellowness
5 Cutting edge
10 "Moby Dick" character
14 Nominate
15 Parts
16 Neighbor of S.Dak.
17 Local level
19 Logical beginning?
20 Designer Head
21 Unadulterated
22 Some NCOs
23 Depended
25 Lisa Bonet on "The Cosby Show"
27 Do perfectly
29 Strongboxes
32 Bundle of joy
35 Tomorrow in Tijuana
39 Prefix for corn or form
40 Big bird Down Under
41 Ruin
42 Itty-bitty bite
43 __ Alamos, NM
44 Jewish queen of Persia
45 Goes on to say
46 Frank McCourt's "Angela's __"
48 Cut
50 Lion groupings
54 Court judgment
58 The clink
60 Auction site
62 Now in Nicaragua
63 Ring of light
64 Easy life
66 Fragrance
67 Toddler's wheels
68 Texas school
69 Feedbag contents
70 Mighty mount
71 Becomes pudding

DOWN

1 Fury
2 Avant-__
3 PC to PC note
4 Fate
5 Yow, it's cold!
6 Bow part
7 Not sotto voce
8 Raison __
9 Ruhr Valley city
10 Jones of "A Family Affair"
11 High-risk investment
12 Cover for a crook
13 JFK and RFK
18 Mets' stadium
24 Ten-cent pieces
26 How 'bout that!
28 Stick it out
30 Author Bagnold
31 Little drinks
32 Composer Bartok
33 Famous cookie maker
34 Remote-area aviator
36 Final degree
37 God of war
38 W. Hemisphere protection syst.
41 Lucy's spouse
45 Holds fast
47 Fielder's mistakes
49 Have on
51 Money owed
52 TV movie critic
53 Hawkins of Dogpatch
55 Perez or O Donnell
56 Upright
57 Alleviates
58 Beat it!
59 Voila!
61 Oxen connector
65 Nourished

Thursday's Puzzle Solved

F	R	O	D	O	■	B	L	O	C	■	D	A	L	E
L	O	P	E	D	■	L	E	N	A	■	A	D	A	M
A	M	E	N	D	■	O	N	E	M	E	D	I	U	M
B	A	N	■	J	I	B	S	■	A	M	A	N	D	A
■	■	■	T	O	N	■	■	A	R	I	■	■	■	■
W	I	T	H	B	L	A	C	K	O	L	I	V	E	S
A	N	O	A	■	A	L	A	I	■	S	T	I	L	T
R	U	N	T	■	W	A	N	T	S	■	A	R	I	E
T	R	I	C	K	■	R	O	A	N	■	L	E	A	P
A	N	C	H	O	V	I	E	S	O	N	I	O	N	S
■	■	■	■	R	I	C	■	■	R	O	C	■	■	■
K	E	I	T	E	L	■	A	B	E	T	■	S	A	T
A	N	D	S	A	L	A	M	I	■	A	T	A	R	I
L	I	L	A	■	A	M	E	N	■	R	I	G	E	L
E	D	E	R	■	S	A	S	S	■	Y	E	A	S	T

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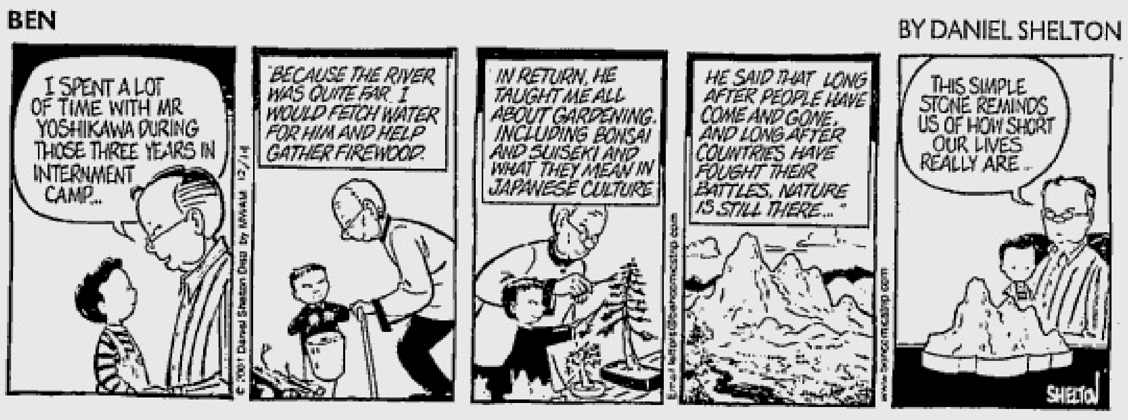
12/12/03

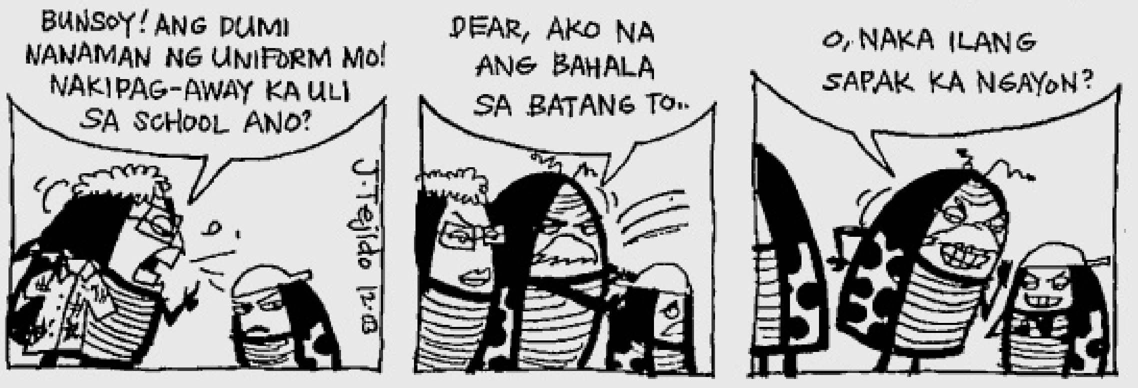
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


I SPENT A LOT OF TIME WITH MR YOSHIKAWA DURING THOSE THREE YEARS IN INTERNMENT CAMP...
"BECAUSE THE RIVER WAS QUITE FAR, I WOULD FETCH WATER FOR HIM AND HELP GATHER FIREWOOD.
IN RETURN, HE TAUGHT ME ALL ABOUT GARDENING, INCLUDING BONSAI AND SUISEKI AND WHAT THEY MEAN IN JAPANESE CULTURE.
HE SAID THAT LONG AFTER PEOPLE HAVE COME AND GONE, AND LONG AFTER COUNTRIES HAVE FOUGHT THEIR BATTLES, NATURE IS STILL THERE..."
THIS SIMPLE STONE REMINDS US OF HOW SHORT OUR LIVES REALLY ARE...
SHELTON

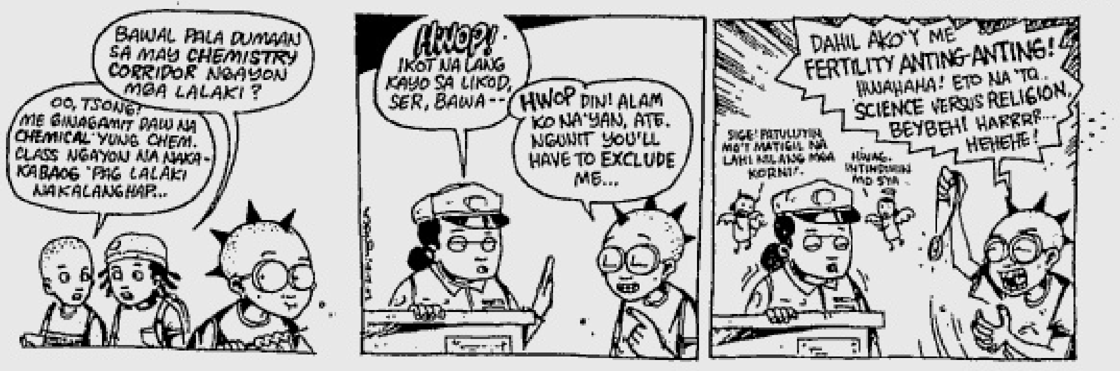
MIKROKOSMOS

BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


BUNSOY! ANG DUMI NANAMAN NG UNIFORM MO! NAKIPAG-AWAY KA ULI SA SCHOOL ANO?
J. Tejido 12-12
DEAR, AKO NA ANG BAHALA SA BATANG TO..
O, NAKA ILANG SAPAK KA NGAYON?

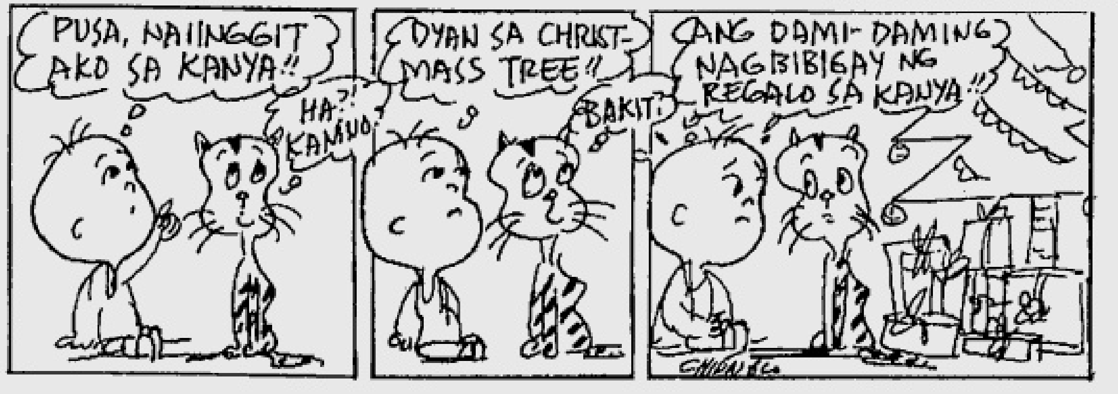
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


BAWAL PALA DUMAAN SA MAY CHEMISTRY CORRIDOR NGAYON MGA LALAKI?
OO, TSONG! ME GINAGAMIT DAW NA CHEMICAL 'YUNG CHEM. CLASS NGAYON NA NAKAKABAOG 'PAG LALAKI NAKALANGHAP...
HWOP! IKOT NA LANG KAYO SA LIKOD, SER, BAWA--
HWOP DIN! ALAM KO NA'YAN, ATE. NGUNIT YOU'LL HAVE TO EXCLUDE ME...
DAHIL AKO'Y ME FERTILITY ANTING-ANTING! WAHAHA! ETO NA 'TO.. SCIENCE VERSUS RELIGION, BEYBEH! HARRRR... HEHEHE!
SIGE! PATULUYIN MO'T MATIGIL NA LAHI NILANG MGA KORNI!
HWAG. INTINDIHIN MO SYA.

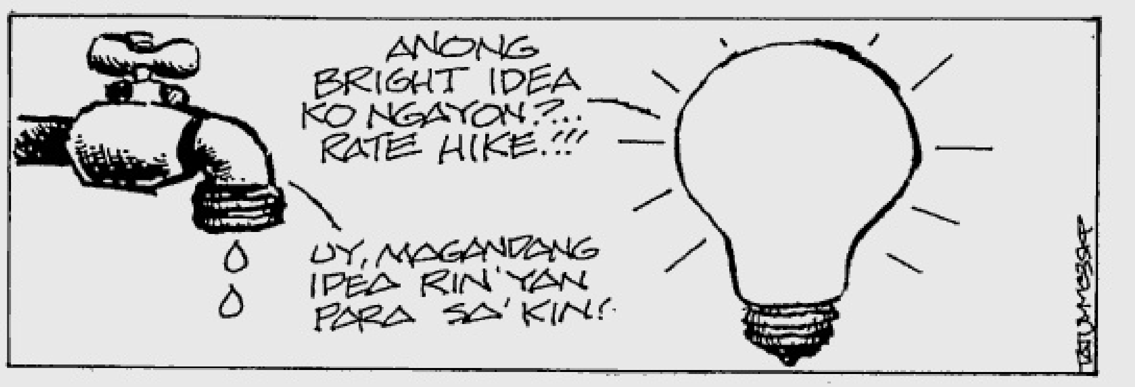
LOVEKNOTS

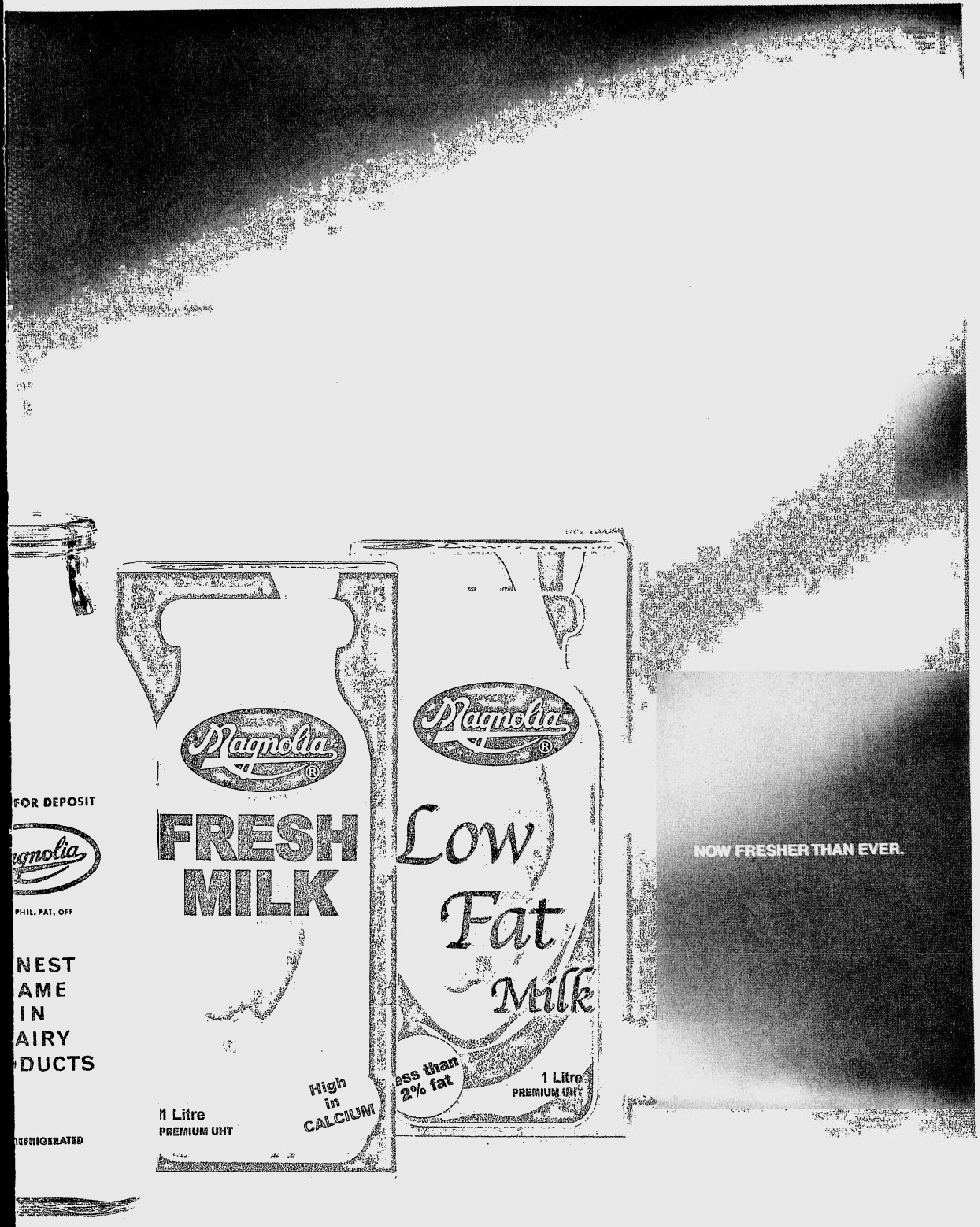
BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


PUSA, NAIINGGIT AKO SA KANYA!!
HA?! KANINO?
DYAN SA CHRISTMASS TREE!!
BAKIT?
ANG DAMI-DAMING NAGBIBIGAY NG REGALO SA KANYA!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


ANONG BRIGHT IDEA KO NGAYON?... RATE HIKE!!!
UY, MAGANDANG IDEA RIN 'YAN PARA SA'KIN!


FOR DEPOSIT
Magnolia
PHIL. PAT. OFF
NEST
AME
IN
AIRY
DUCTS
REFRIGERATED
Magnolia
FRESH MILK
1 Litre
PREMIUM UHT
High in CALCIUM
Magnolia
Low Fat Milk
ess than 2% fat
1 Litre
PREMIUM UHT
NOW FRESHER THAN EVER.

Available in supermarkets starting January 2004.

How to keep your home safe this Christmas

THE THINGS that make Christmas the most joyous holiday in the Philippines may bring tragedy in the midst of the merrymaking. According to Fred Ramos, head of Corporate Safety at Manila Electric Company (Meralco), it is not unusual for accidents to occur during the Christmas season because of electricity-related fires and accidents. These incidents, he said, happen mostly in households.

Some of the common causes of electricity-related fires during Christmas are overloading due to the use of "octopus connection" for Christmas lights and decors bulbs and other light sources getting in contact with draperies and combustible or flammable Christmas decors, and leaving Christmas lights on and unattended for long periods of time.

Meanwhile, use of Christmas lights with frayed wires, using indoor type lights and décors for outdoor purposes and children playing with Christmas lights could lead to electrical shocks or electrocution.

CHILDREN should be kept away from Christmas lights and other electrically operated decorations.

As the Christmas season nears, and just like other times of the year, Meralco field personnel are conducting regular check up and maintenance of all transformers and other electrical facilities to ensure that these are in A-1 condition.

"We are exercising precautionary measures during the holidays to prevent electricity related accidents within Meralco's scope of responsibility," Ramos said.

That is not to say however that the public can be complacent about electrical safety. Ramos outlined a few tips on how electricity-related accidents can be prevented during the holidays.

- Do not overload the household electrical system. Any excess load might result to heating that could cause fire.
- Keep all combustible materials including curtains and carpets away from electric light sources. All incandescent light sources produce heat no matter how small they are and may cause fires.
- Purchase Christmas lights and electrical decorations approved by the Bureau of Product Standards.
- When purchasing an artificial tree, make sure it is labeled as fire-retardant.
- Discard all Christmas lights with frayed or cracked wires. A small strand of wire thinner than a human hair can cause severe electrical shock.
- Do not use foils or other metallic objects in place of busted light bulbs in Christmas lights.
- Always unplug Christmas lights before replacing light bulbs or fuses.
- Children should be kept away from Christmas lights and other electrically operated decorations.
- Turn off all Christmas lights and decorations before leaving the house or going to bed.

Ramos encourages the public to observe these simple safety measures during the holidays. Being mindful of electrical safety is a small prize to pay for an accident-free season and can spell difference between joy and tragedy during the holidays.

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JAZZ
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Robinsons Town Mall Los Banos | Tutuban Center | Starmall Shaw | Metropolis Star Alabang | Waltermart Plaridel, Sta. Rosa, Gen. Trias | Nepo Mall Pampanga

Credit card lets you build your dream kitchen

DESIGNING your dream kitchen can strain your budget, so why not use your Citibank credit card's PayLite Installment Plan?

PayLite lets cardholders pay for big ticket items like furniture, appliances, jewelry, electronic gadgets, gym memberships and even school tuition in longer and lighter terms—from three to 24 months at zero or reduced interest rates.

Ongoing until Dec. 31 is Citibank PayLite's zero percent interest promotion in over 30 participating merchants nationwide.

Just charge a minimum amount of P3,000 to your Citibank credit cards and use PayLite for 3 to 12 monthly installments. To enjoy absolutely zero percent interest, you need to pay your outstanding balance in full for the duration of the PayLite term.

Here are some tips for sprucing up your kitchen or creating a totally new one:

Lay out the work triangle to determine the most practical positioning of different sections and appliances. Put a convenient distance so you take fewer steps going from one to the other.

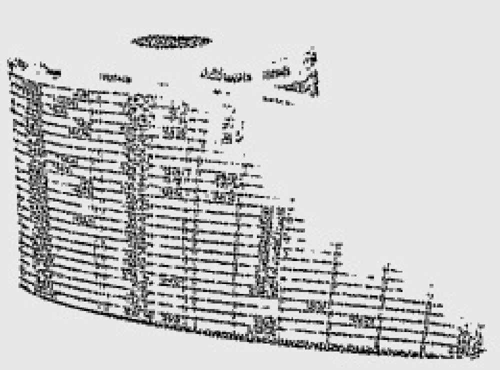
Determine minimum space requirements. Keep ample space between cabinets, worktop, stove and sink for easy movement.

Design the kitchen for ease and safety. Make sure hazardous objects and appliances are not within reach of children.

Avoid clutter. See to it that windows, cabinet doors and other things in the kitchen are not blocked.

Call the 24-hour CitiPhone at 9959999 or visit www.citibank.com.ph.

Are you wiping your child with toilet paper that is recycled office paper?



It's true. Your toilet paper – like most toilet paper – is probably recycled paper that has been treated with chlorine, bleach and artificial whiteners. If you want toilet paper that's clean from the very beginning, choose unrecycled Sanicare. It's 100% virgin pulp, 100% virgin-clean. Untouched by chlorine, bleach and artificial whiteners. Soft but strong, and so reasonably priced. Sanicare. Unrecycled for maximum hygiene, for you.

SCPA
SANITARY CARE PRODUCTS ASIA

Use
Sanicare
100% VIRGIN PULP.
100% VIRGIN-CLEAN.
Sa virgin ka na!

UNRECYCLED 100% Virgin Pulp For Maximum Hygiene
Sanicare
600s
100% Virgin Pulp

For feedback, text us at (0919) 800-3354 or (0916) 200-1160 or e-mail us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

LIFESTYLE

Tops for the holidays

STORY ON PAGE F2

onstage 2nyt

Cowboy Grill	Cowboy Grill	Cowboy Grill
LAS PIÑAS ☎ 801.7644	FAT 16 CRO MAGNON	OPEN FROM 6PM TO 5AM NO ENTRANCE FEE
MABINI ☎ 525.1474	POWER SURGE PHRYGIAN/SERSIDE	OPEN FROM 6PM TO 6AM NO ENTRANCE FEE
MALATE ☎ 521.8143	MUSIC CIRCUIT MEN OPPOSE	OPEN FROM 6PM TO 5AM NO ENTRANCE FEE
NOVALICHES ☎ 936.9757	BLAKDYAK BEAT BOX/HEADWORKZ	OPEN FROM 6PM TO 5AM GABRIELA EVERY THURSDAY OF DEC.
BIÑAN ☎ (049)511.7268	HEARTBEAT/KOOLJACKS EMMANUELLE	OPEN FROM 6PM TO 5AM NO ENTRANCE FEE
TIA MARIA'S	TIA MARIA'S	TIA MARIA'S
JUPITER ☎ 890.4735	MUSIC ZONE FIRST SIGHT	NO ENTRANCE FEE
REMEDIOS ☎ 522.0429	VERSE 2 P R P	NO ENTRANCE FEE
TOMAS MORATO ☎ 371.1473	RHYTHM ACE SYMPOSIUM	NO ENTRANCE FEE
Partyplace SAN FERNANDO, PAMPANGA ☎ (045)961.3360	XTREME	DEC.26-PAOLO SANTOS
PANDA FOREST	ORIGIN SOULD OUT T.M. KALAW COR. PARADE ST. LUNETA PARK, MANILA	FREE PULUTAN EVERY 2 PITCHERS OR 5 BOTTLES OF BEER ☎ 400-7435/525-0514

DECEMBER 12 FRIDAY [illegible] 38-3942

WHAT'S ON AT ROBINSONS

RENZ VERANO

One of the country's leading Pop-Balladeers takes the center-stage at Robinsons. Watch Renz Verano as he sings songs from his new album under Universal Records entitled "Everyday".

big [illegible]

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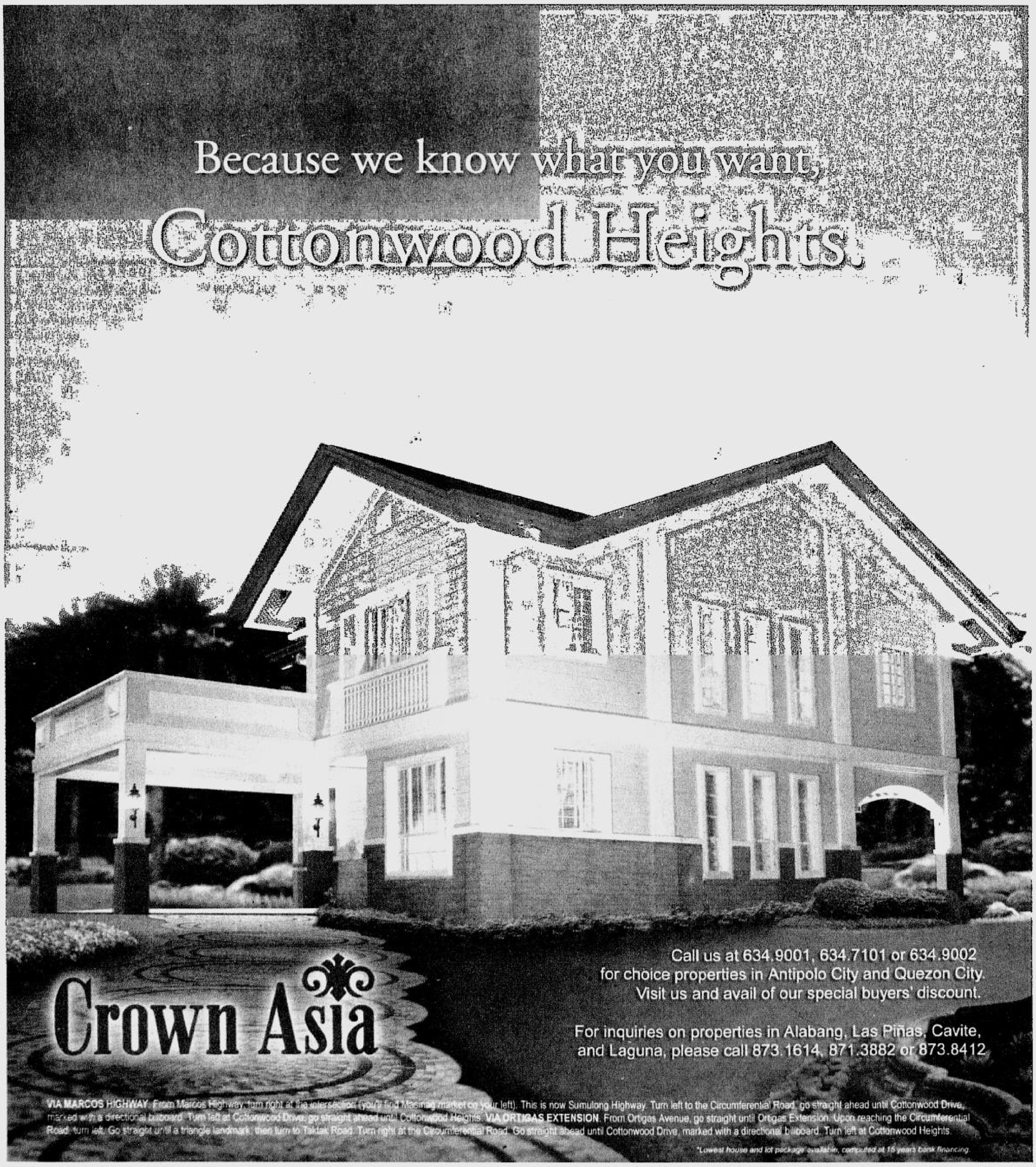
i SPA.



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Cottonwood Heights.

Crown Asia

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VIA MARCOS HIGHWAY. From Marcos Highway, turn right at the intersection (you'll find Masinag market on your left). This is now Sumulong Highway. Turn left to the Circumferential Road, go straight ahead until Cottonwood Drive, marked with a directional billboard. Turn left at Cottonwood Drive, go straight ahead until Cottonwood Heights. **VIA ORTIGAS EXTENSION.** From Ortigas Avenue, go straight until Ortigas Extension. Upon reaching the Circumferential Road, turn left. Go straight until a triangle landmark, then turn to Taktak Road. Turn right at the Circumferential Road. Go straight ahead until Cottonwood Drive, marked with a directional billboard. Turn left at Cottonwood Heights.

*Lowest house and lot package available, computed at 15 years bank financing.

Tops for the holidays

CLOCKWISE, from top: Three-fourth red turtle neck; bandeau net dress; and printed dress

WHETHER you're a punk princess, a dainty chick, a retro babe or a grunge man—Topshop and Topman have something to keep you fashionably merry this season.

The '50s lets you pull off a girlie, cute style with a dash of Hollywood glam. Here, bows are the details, wide necks and peter pan collars are a must, cardigans and full skirts, the must-haves. It's fifties, feminine and fun!

Big sequins, faux fur, opaque tights, plastic mace and mini skirts are brought together to create a Barbella-style '60s look. Cutout detailing, shin dresses, clean lines and simple silhouettes are all key in this collection inspired by the bygone era's obsession with space travel and science fiction.

The swinging London of the '60s is evident in pelmets, crops, blouses and princess collar coats with graphic prints and bold colors. Look modish and smart this Christmas with the hottest tweeds and checks.

Skate Punk gives a chic edge to your holiday dressing. Think Avril Lavigne, lots of black and striped knitwear and fatigues and utility pieces next to motif tees and micro tees and you have totally achieved the look.

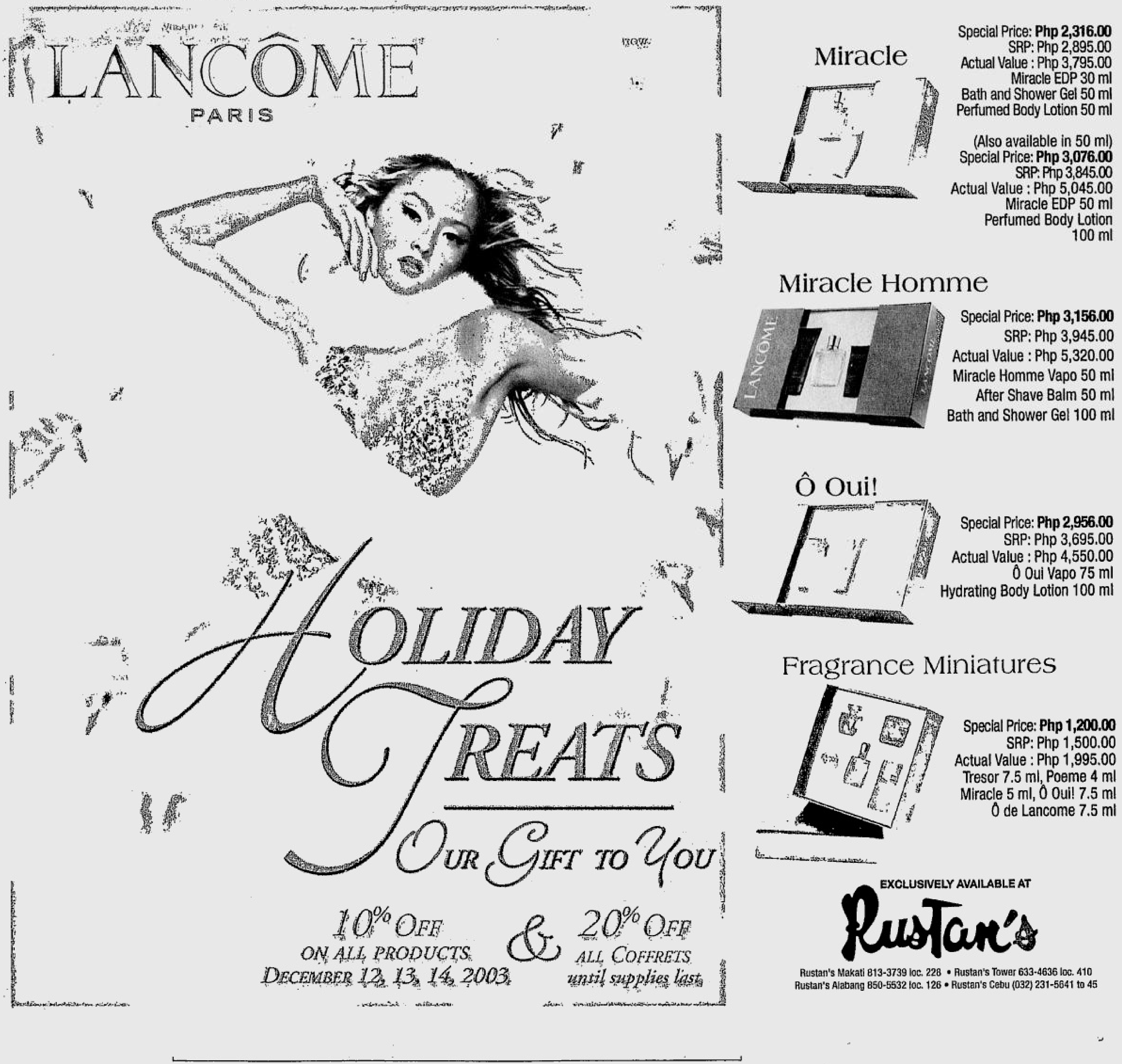
For men, think modern and eclectic spiked with a grunge flavor. The collection draws on the Nirvana era for inspiration with chunky handknits, duffels, hooded shirts and knitted hats.

And since the season calls for treats, Topshop is giving you one. Get two knickers from only P395 to P495 until Dec. 31.

Topshop and Topman's certificates are available in P500 denominations for spreading the joy of fashion with fashionista friends.

Topshop is at Robinsons Place Manila, Robinsons Galleria, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Glorietta, Alabang Town Center and Robinsons Department Store in Galleria. Topman stores are at Robinsons Galleria, Robinsons Place Manila and Robinsons Department Store in Galleria.

BLACK tube dress and silver bag



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PARIS

HOLIDAY TREATS
OUR GIFT TO YOU

10% OFF
ON ALL PRODUCTS
DECEMBER 12, 13, 14, 2003
&
20% OFF
ALL COFFRETS
until supplies last

Miracle
Special Price: **Php 2,316.00**
SRP: Php 2,895.00
Actual Value : Php 3,795.00
Miracle EDP 30 ml
Bath and Shower Gel 50 ml
Perfumed Body Lotion 50 ml

(Also available in 50 ml)
Special Price: **Php 3,076.00**
SRP: Php 3,845.00
Actual Value : Php 5,045.00
Miracle EDP 50 ml
Perfumed Body Lotion
100 ml

Miracle Homme
Special Price: **Php 3,156.00**
SRP: Php 3,945.00
Actual Value : Php 5,320.00
Miracle Homme Vapo 50 ml
After Shave Balm 50 ml
Bath and Shower Gel 100 ml

Ô Oui!
Special Price: **Php 2,956.00**
SRP: Php 3,695.00
Actual Value : Php 4,550.00
Ô Oui Vapo 75 ml
Hydrating Body Lotion 100 ml

Fragrance Miniatures
Special Price: **Php 1,200.00**
SRP: Php 1,500.00
Actual Value : Php 1,995.00
Tresor 7.5 ml, Poeme 4 ml
Miracle 5 ml, Ô Oui! 7.5 ml
Ô de Lancome 7.5 ml

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Philips awards Most Promising Inventions

Continuing its tradition of innovations and inventions, Philips Philippines awarded the top inventors of this year's Department of Science and Technology National Inventors Week (DOST-NIW) with the Philips Most Promising Invention Award in a special awarding ceremony held recently at the Malacañan Palace.

Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo graced the awarding and commended all the participants of the DOST-National Inventors Week. Joining the President were Philips Philippines President and CEO Menardo Mateo, Philips Semiconductors Philippines, Inc. General Manager Steven Brader, and Philips Corporate Communications Officer Maria C.V. Santos.

Technology Application and Promotion Institute (TAPI) Director Ma. Lourdes P. Orijola and Philips Philippines President and CEO Menardo Mateo present to President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between Philips Phillipines and the Department of Science and Technology. Also shown seated (from left) UN Development Program Resident Representative Deborah Landey; House Committee Chair on Science and Technology Rodolfo Bacani; and Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Inc. (FFCCCII) President Robin Sy.

PHILIPS
BEST
Philips executives with awardees of Philips Most Promising Invention Award (L-R): Philips Semiconductors Director and Business Fulfillment Manager Vio Aguinaldo; Philips Medical Systems Senior Manager Butch Soriano; Roderick Sotto of St. Louis University, Special Award for College level; Christopher Batbatan of Mindanao State University, Sibol College level; Eric Hernandez of Ramon Magsaysay High School, Special Award for High School level; Philips Philippines President and CEO Menardo Mateo; Isidro Umali-Ursua of Sapient International Directors Holdings, Inc., Likha Category; April Sison and Michael Centino of E. Rodriguez High School, Sibol High School level; Philips Chief Finance Officer Daisy Enriquez; Philips Semiconductors Sales & Marketing Senior Manager Jun Santa Ana; and Philips Consumer Electronics General Manager Angelo Valenton

Also present in the event were Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Secretary Estrella F. Alabastro, House of Representatives Committee Chairman on Science and Technology Rodolfo C. Bacani, Technology Application and Promotion Institute (TAPI) Director Ma. Lourdes P. Orijola, United Nations Development Program Resident Representative Deborah Landey and Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Inc. President Robin Sy.

With Her Excellency President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo (from left): Atty. Jesus Santos, Philips Philippines President and CEO Menardo Mateo, House Committee Chair on Science and Technology Rodolfo Bacani, and Philips Semiconductors Philippines, Inc. General Manager Steven Brader

"It is always a distinct privilege to be associated with inventors, a rare breed of men and women who shape our changing world and the way we live," says Mateo. "Our modest contribution is to recognize their efforts, challenge the creative minds of the scientific community towards greater inventions and innovations."

He adds, "Philips is always conscious of its mission to make things better. We invent technology, healthcare and lifestyle products that improve people's lives. This drives us in presenting these awards that nurture, promote and reward Filipino talents."

Winning the Philips Most Promising Invention Award for the Sibol High School Level are Michael A. Centino, April Rose Sison and Brylester Aguado of E. Rodriguez High School. The Philips Most Promising Invention Award for the Sibol College Level went to Christopher Batbatan of Mindanao State University- Iligan Institute of Technology while the Philips Most Promising Invention Award for the Likha Category was presented to Isidro Umali Ursua of Sapient International Directors Holdings, Inc.

Philips Special Invention Awards were also awarded to Eric A. Hernandez of Ramon Magsaysay High School for the High School Level and Roderick P. Sotto of St. Louis University for the College Level.

The Philips Most Promising Invention Award is a testament to Philips' strong and sincere commitment to develop and support Filipino talent and reinforces Philips' reputation as a socially responsible corporate citizen.

Mateo then offered an advice to the winners. "Ideas do not remain hot forever. The road an inventor trudges on is oftentimes a lonely one and there will be many times you will find yourself hauling your own load. It will be difficult but stay on course and your efforts will be rewarded."

Inventors as catalysts of national pride

More than being catalysts of change, inventors are also considered catalysts of national pride. The inventions of people like Thomas Edison, Henry Ford, Alexander Graham Bell, Charles Good Year, George Eastman and Bill Gates not only changed and shaped the manner we live in such profound ways, but also brought pride and distinction to their country and fellowmen.

Inspired by the impact and value that new inventions have on our lives, this year's winners of the Philips Most Promising Invention Award have invented products and researched on studies that aim to enhance our lives, protect our environment and hopefully establish the Philippines as one of the world's hotspots where inventors and their inventions flourish.

A desire to produce cheap electricity was what spurred Isidro Umali Ursua to invent the *Skyla Hydro Turbine*, which won for him the Philips Most Promising Invention Award Likha Category. He says his work is designed "to give the world cheap power that will come from non-fossil fuel, non-polluting, renewable and abundant energy sources." The Skyla Hydro Turbine is an efficient hydro turbine in the world that can be used in the open sea, producing cheap electrical power worth only two US cents per kilowatt-hour.

For Christopher Batbatan, winner of the Philips Most Promising Invention Award Sibol College Level, his work on the *Antibiotic-Producing Microbial Isolates Obtained from Marine Sponges* was borne out of a desire to "help lower the prices of drugs." Through his work, antibiotics can now be manufactured locally, resulting in the lowering of prices and even create jobs.

A specific cure for leukemia was what spurred Michael Centino, April Rose Sison and Brylester Aguado of E. Rodriguez High School to work on the *Cytotoxicological Assay and Anti-Leukemia Potential of the Yellow-Lipped Sea Krait*, recipient of the Philips Most Promising Invention Award for the Sibol High School Level. " The cytotoxic activity and anti-leukemic potential of the yellow-lipped sea krait venom against leukemic lymphocytes exhibited 100 percent efficacy," says Centino. "Hopefully our work could turn out to be a specific cure for leukemia, something which science hasn't discovered yet."

Michael Centino (4th from left), and April Rose Sison (extreme right) of E. Rodriguez High School receive the Philips Most Promising Invention Award Sibol High School level from Her Excellency Pres. Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo. With them (from left) are Philips Semiconductors Philippines, Inc. Gen. Manager Steven Brader and Philips Philippines President and CEO Menardo Mateo

Recipient of the Philips Most Promising Invention Award Likha Category, Isidro Umali-Ursua of Sapient International Directors Holdings, Inc.(extreme right), with Philips Consumer Electronics General Manager Angelo Valenton and Philips Philippines President and CEO Menardo Mateo

Recipient of the Philips Most Promising Invention Award for Sibol College level, Christopher Batbatan of Mindanao State University (center), with TAPI Director Ma. Lourdes Orijola and Philips Semiconductors Sales and Marketing Senior Manager Jun Santa Ana.

For his part, Hernandez says his work on *Sex Reversal of Live-Bearing Fishes with the Use of Egg Yolk of Different Avian Species* is designed to help make artificially prepared sex reversal hormones at a cheaper price for fish breeders. "My project will help produce more female fishes so that more fishes can be created, thereby increasing output." His work won for him a Philips Special Invention Award.

Another winner of the Philips Special Invention Award is Roderick P. Sotto for his work on *The Effects of Sea Cucumber Extract on Wound Healing of Orytolagus Cunculus.* He says his work "will equal betadine and hasten the healing of wounds. Its application will be useful mainly in the field of surgery."

The awardees were one in agreeing that the support of companies like Philips counts a lot in helping Filipino inventors. "The support of Philips helps boost the potential of Filipino inventors and gives them the necessary recognition they truly deserve," says Sotto. The E. Rodriguez High School students say that through the support of Philips, "minds of budding scientists are motivated to discover new things and help improve people's lives." Batbatan for his part says that, "we feel honored that a company like Philips recognizes and gives great value to our work."

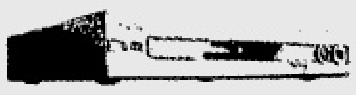
Through their remarkable ideas, admirable perseverance and the support of socially responsible companies like Philips, these inventors and their works will undoubtedly leave an indelible mark now and in the future as they tread the path towards becoming the country's source of national pride.

Philips:
A heritage of innovations and inventions

Philips started in 1891 with Gerard and Anton Philips, brothers known for their practical ingenuity and business acumen. Their founding belief was that by making choices that improve people's lives both inside and outside the company, they would be successful not by coincidence but by design. Not only did they invent useful products, but they also knew how, and where, to sell them.

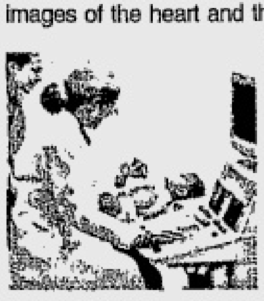
From the company that gave the world the incandescent bulb, compact audiocassette tape, Laser Vision optical disc and the Compact Disc, Philips continues to amaze the world with innovations that constantly change and enhance people's lives.

Just recently, Philips developed the Mirror TV, a versatile LCD display integrated into a mirror. It uses a unique polarized mirror technology that transfers close to a hundred percent of the light through the reflective surface and provides a range of functions beyond TV programming since it can also be used as a desktop/ workstation application. Users can link their laptop or home PC to the Mirror TV with a special connector that enables the mirror to become a LCD monitor, providing a large display for presentations or surfing the Web.



Philips also reinforces its reputation as a pioneer in digital entertainment with the introduction of its award-winning DVD recorders. It gives consumers the chance to capture and store precious memories for generations to come. By recording birthday celebrations, holidays, weddings or favorite TV shows onto a DVD+RW or DVD+R disc, users can be sure that they can continue reliving their special moments—time after time, without any loss in picture quality.

In healthcare, Philips recognizes that there is no room for compromises so it comes up with the best equipment possible like the SONOS 7500 with Live 3D Echo. This high-performance, digital ultra-sound system allows the most comprehensive cardiac echo examinations possible. It also provides real-time images of the heart and the complex interactions between its valves, chambers and vessels with such clarity and detail that it has been described as being similar to "holding the heart in your hands."



Though times may have changed, Philips knows that basic needs, especially at home have not. So it develops products that make home life more relaxing and enjoyable like the Philips Sonicare range that brings a whole new dimension to oral hygiene. Unlike many ordinary electric toothbrushes, Sonicare uses patented sonic technology that is clinically proven to significantly remove coffee, tea and tobacco stains, ensuring that teeth and gums are really clean and healthy.

From the incandescent lamp, Philips has made considerable contributions in the lighting market by introducing remarkable innovations. It has recently introduced the Philips LIFEMAX fluorescent lamp that lasts up to 60% longer than regular fluorescent lamps. It has a unique Triple Coil that is thicker and more durable compared to coils of other brands. It is also thinner and has lower wattage than regular fluorescent lights but just as bright. Philips LIFEMAX gives as much as 10% savings on energy, making it a much better value choice for today's energy-conscious consumers.

Built on a bedrock of invention and innovation, Philips today holds close to 100,000 of the world's patents in inventions and this figure is growing, thanks to research, which has always been Philips' core strength.

Now, Philips is a global leader in digital technologies for television and displays, wireless communications, speech recognition, video compression, storage and optical products as well as the underlying semiconductor technology that makes these breakthroughs possible.

Indeed, Philips's heritage of innovations and inventions has firmly cemented its reputation as a company that constantly creates products that improve people's lives.

PHILIPS

ADVT.

Rizal towns issue SOS

SEEING GREEN

Doris Gaskell Nuyda

IN THE COURSE of her nationwide environmental audit as the Philippines' Commissioner for Science and Technology of the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco), Leonarda N. Camacho has uncovered a few ugly spots in our environmental picture, which she can file under "Bad News" (see this column's Nov. 28 issue).

One of her findings has to do with quarrying operations in Rizal province, particularly Montalban (now Rodriguez) and San Mateo. People there are protesting that the operations are detrimental to the environment and their health. They are demanding that the activity be phased out.

Although quarrying (of basalt and andesite rocks) is taking its environmental toll in these two towns, three other Rizal municipalities—Angono, Antipolo and Tanay—have joined the protest against unlawful encroachment in their lands.

The towns' representatives—four people's organizations and non-government organizations, namely, Buklod Tao Inc., Gising Kabayan, Kapasan and Sanaka-Rizal, have sought the advice of engineers and other experts. They have pored over case studies of quarrying operations in their areas leading them to write a position paper outlining their points. They submitted this last October.

The paper explains that most towns in the province are mainly agricultural and pasture land. They are surrounded by rivers and watershed rainforests, protected areas rightfully falling under the National Integrated Areas System (Nipas).

Food source

The paper adds that Rizal is a source of most of the fruits and vegetables sold in markets in neighboring areas. For a legal framework, the position paper calls attention to Proclamation 1636 which, among other things, states what can and cannot be done in national parks, wildlife sanctuaries and game preserves, forest and watershed areas. In view of this, land titles, Environmental Certificates of Compliance (ECC) or Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) need to be reviewed and investigated.

Quarrying operators are the focal point of the complaints since their presence opens up an unwieldy mix-use of protected areas. One study describes the confusion as "the blatant extraction of non-renewable resource within protected land…" Extraction, especially in an area not meant for it, can only bring destruction to the town and unhappiness to its people.

In San Mateo, recently the site of a garbage disposal scheme (earning for it the label Garbage Dump of Metro Manila), residents have taken to reminiscing about what their life was before quarrying began—rivers were pure, land was green, air cool and fresh. Now with the intrusion, the idyll has been shattered, and the effect is not beneficial to them.

Complaints of Montalban residents, on the other hand, follow Pagasa's observations: "The siltation of the Montalban River and its tributaries due to erosion has caused the shallow condition of the rivers… In the event of heavy downpour… widespread flooding occurs."

Bills awaiting action

The position paper cites many more violations of environmental laws (the copy I have is 45 pages long) but it is not the only Bad News laid out for Camacho's scrutiny. She also found out that six bills dealing with protected areas had been sitting in Congress for the past several years and no action had been taken on them. We hope they haven't, as Solita C. Monsod would say of such inaction, "been relegated to the legislative dustbin." The "forgotten" bills are:

- House Bill No. 1696, "An act establishing the Apo Reef in Sablayan, Occidental Mindoro, as a protected area under the classification of natural park and its peripheral waters as buffer zones, providing for its management, funds, and other purposes," by Rep. Josephine Y. Ramiro-Sato.
- House Bill No. 2777, "An act declaring Mt. Hamiguitan Range and its vicinities as protected areas under the category of wildlife sanctuary and its peripheral areas as buffer zone and appropriating funds therefore," by Rep. J. Mayo Z. Almario.
- House Bill No. 02776, "An act declaring a portion of the San Isidro coastal waters as protected area and its peripheral areas as buffer zone to be known as the San Isidro Protected Seascape and appropriating funds therefore," by Rep. J. Mayo Z. Almario.
- House Bill No. 01689, "An act declaring the Chocolate Hills as national patrimony and geological monuments, penalizing their plunder, destruction or defacement and for other purposes," by Rep. Eladio M. Jala.
- House Bill No. 01144, "An act establishing for each region a five-hectare arboretum declaring it as protected area for ecological preservation, allocating funds therefore and for other purposes," by Rep. Roselet J. Baninaga.
- House Bill No. 01453, "An act converting the Hinulugan Taktak National Park in the City of Antipolo, province of Rizal, into a national park and convention center, repealing for the purpose Republic Act No. Sixty-Nine Hundred and Sixty Four entitled 'An Act converting the Hinulugan Taktak Recreation Area in the Municipality of Antipolo, province of Rizal into a national park to be known as the 'Hinulugan Taktak National Park' and appropriating funds therefore," by Rep. Victor R. Sumulong.

Some of these bills are urgent, particularly the one concerning Chocolate Hills in Bohol. Reports reach us that quarrying has leveled off some of the mounds, a major tourist attraction. The same goes for the Apo Reef and, for that matter, many other reefs under Philippine jurisdiction.

We wonder why these bills have not been acted upon. Did time run out for the Congress? Were they not considered important enough?

In the midst of all the confusion caused by crime and politics, among other reasons, to lose the bio-diversity we have long been famous for, as well as the natural beauty around us, is like losing our identity, a source of pride. And heaven knows, this country needs to be proud of something positive.

E-mail the author at dorisnuyda@yahoo.com

Christmas Medley
THE GRINCHMAS
FESTIVAL SUPERMALL
FILINVEST ALABANG
December 22 - 23, 2pm & 5pm
Treat your family to a Yuletide musical play with this well-loved Christmas tale!
Carousel Court, Level 2

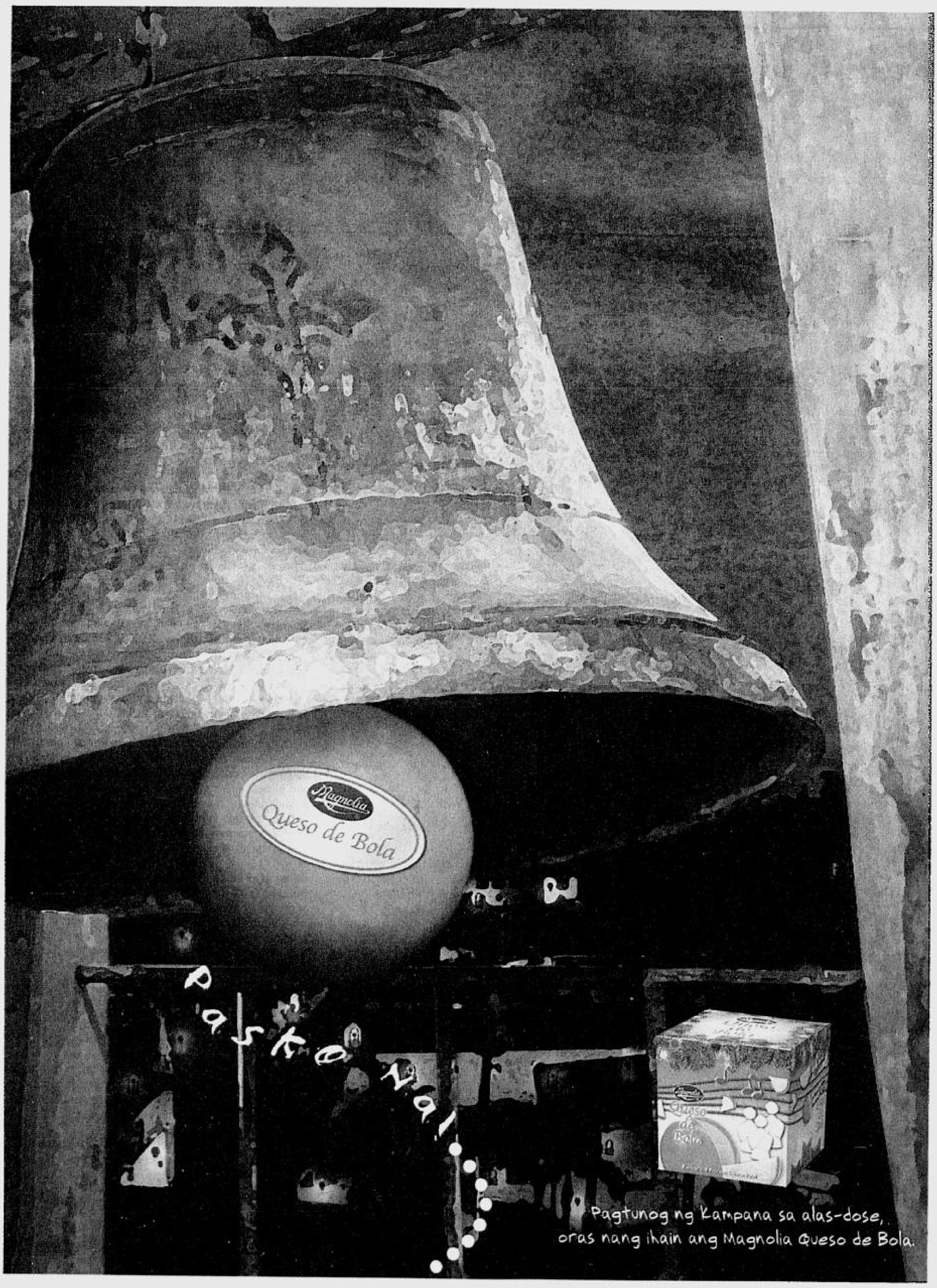
The Sinus Relief Mall Tour
Featuring Arnee Hidalgo & RJ Rosales
Dec. 13, 3pm - 6pm
Carousel Court, Level 2

Globally Acclaimed The Loboc Children's Choir
December 20, Saturday
3:30 pm (Preview)
7:00 pm (Gala Night)
December 21, Sunday
3:00 pm & 7:00 pm
Carousel Court, Level 2

Toys & Gifts Fair
Dec. 11, 2003 to Jan. 4, 2004
Carousel Court, Level 2

Kiddie Video Festival
Dec. 11-12, 15-18, 2pm & 4pm
Dec. 24-30, 11am & 5pm
Carousel Court, Level 2
Experience a Cinematic Feast of the Best Christmas films

Holiday Shopping Hours: 10 am - 10 pm from December 5 to 23


Magnolia
Queso de Bola
Paskonal
Pagtunog ng kampana sa alas-dose,
oras nang ihain ang Magnolia Queso de Bola.

Sunday Mass at cactus show

A SPECIAL Mass will be celebrated on Sunday at the on-going 25th Anniversary Garden Show and Christmas Bazaar of the Cactus and Succulent Society of the Philippines Inc. at the Lagoon Island, Orchidarium Park, Quezon City Hall Complex corner Elliptical Road and East Avenue.

The show, which ends Monday, also features a series of lectures. Today, Dr. Danny Ang will discuss Aviary Management. Fely Gupit will demonstrate the use of cacti and succulents in natural stone arrangements tomorrow and on Sunday, Serapion Metilla will talk about flower arrangement using cacti and succulents.

On Dec. 15, last day of the show, Rosario "Chit" Rudo will discuss dish gardening.

The show is open to the public for free 8 a.m.-7 p.m.

LIFESTYLE

For feedback, text us at (0919) 880-3354 or (0916) 200-1160 or e-mail us at pr_lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

SPARKLE!

Guest editor Apples Aberin Sadhwani

A holiday fashion and beauty special

WHAT'S INSIDE

Flirty little dresses to make you shine G2

H1 Making sense of scents and style

Pretty purses and party shoes H2

Precious baubles for the season of joy H4

Clothes maketh a modern man I1

Makeup forecast: warm with a dash of gold I2

I2 Tips on post-party face cleansing

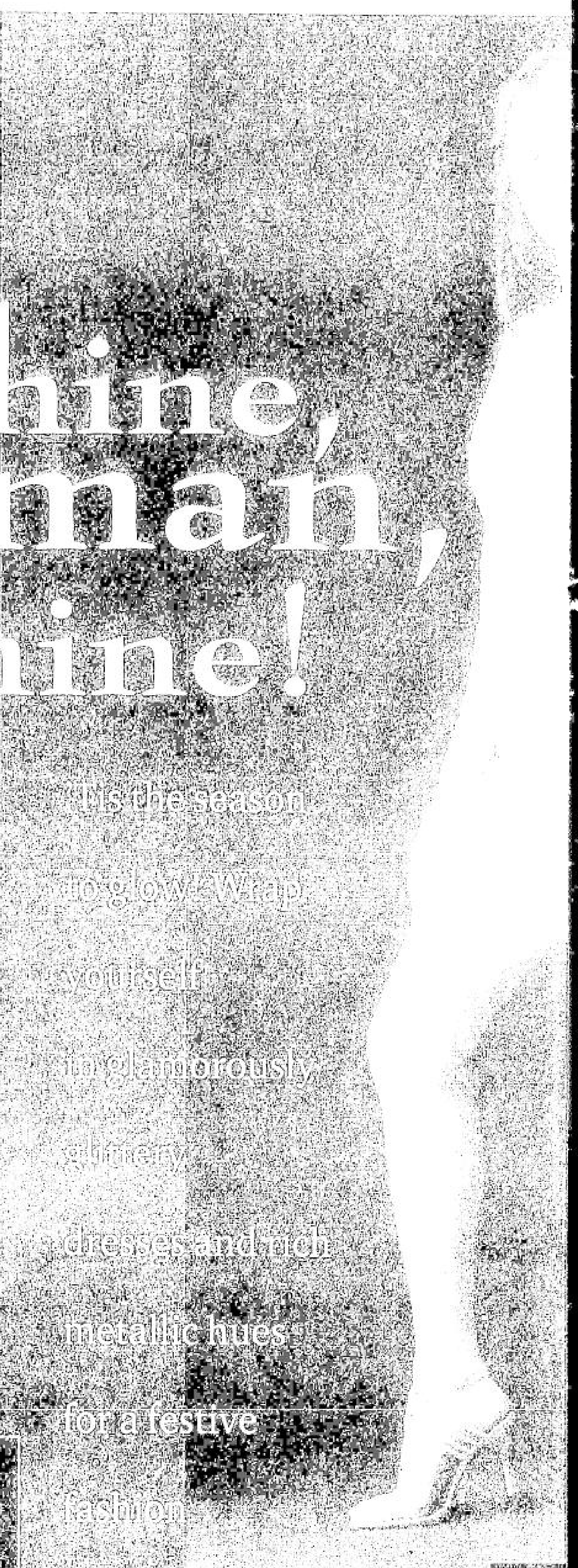
NINE WEST

Rustan's Makati, Rustan's Tower, Rustan's Cubao, Rustan's Harrison Plaza, Greenbelt 3, Glorietta 3, Alabang Town Center, SM Megamall, Robinsons Place Manila, Robinsons Galleria, Shangri-La Plaza, Festival SuperMall, The Power Plant and Ayala Center Cebu

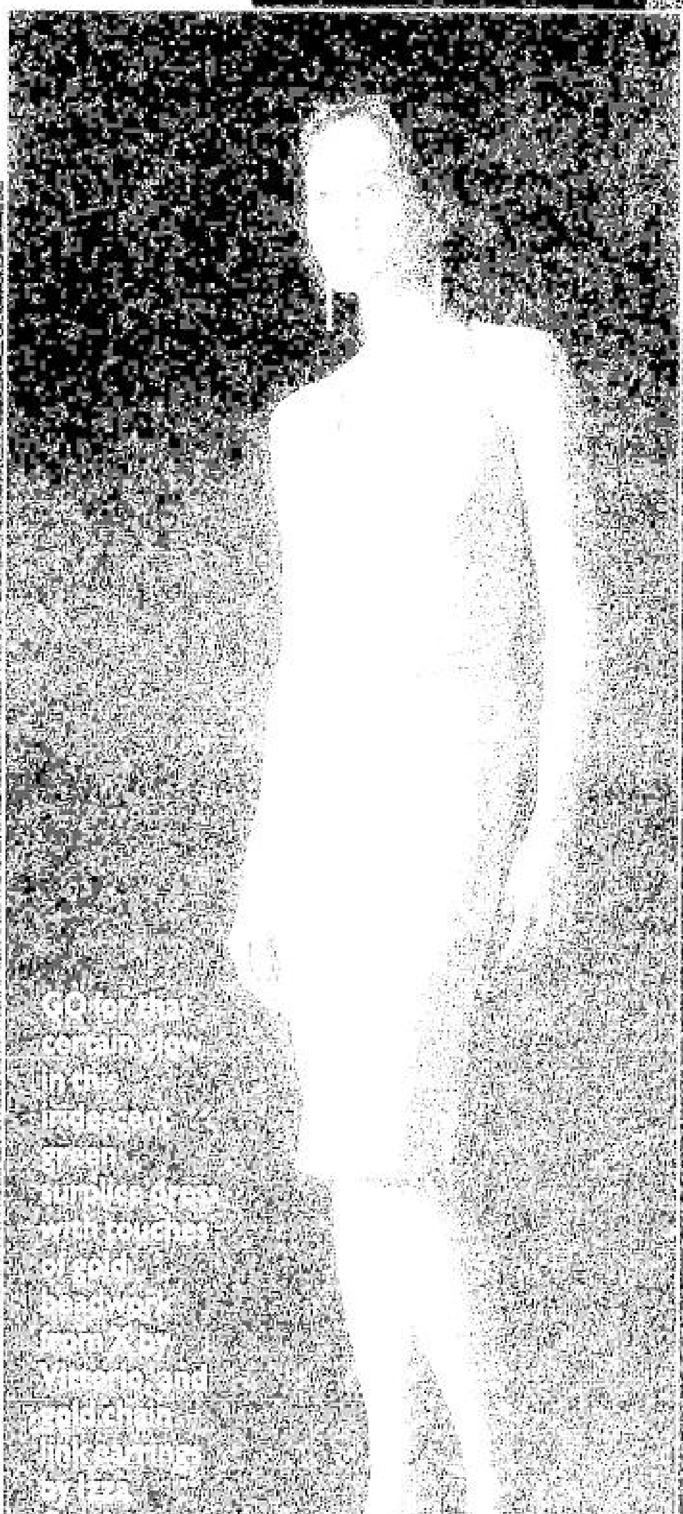
Shine, woman, shine!

'Tis the season to glow. Wrap yourself in glamorously glittery dresses and rich metallic hues for a festive fashion stateme

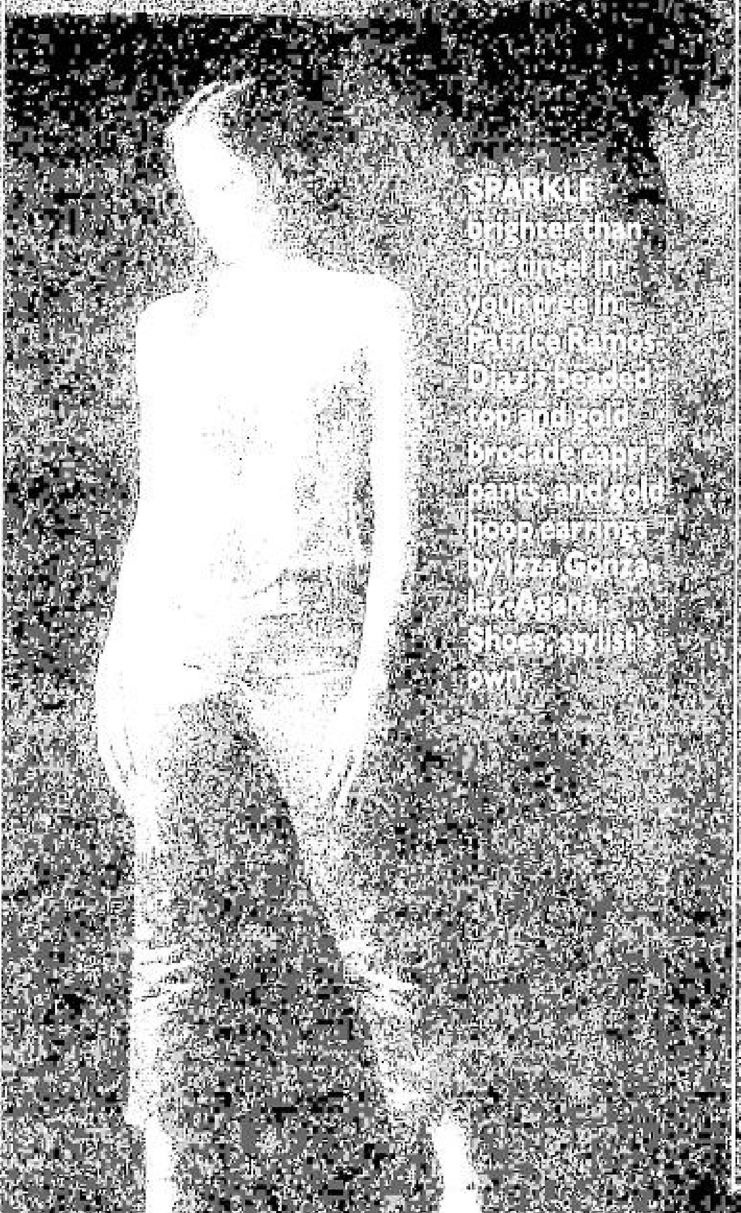
DENNIS Lustico, one of fashion's brightest stars, creates a mini dress with stylized terno sleeves in a Christmassy copper hue. Mother-of-pearl choker from Ice Crystals.



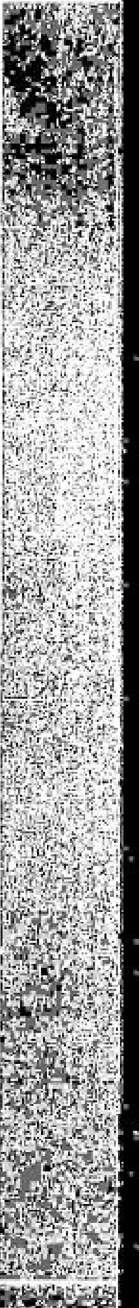
MAKE an entrance in Frederick Peralta's shimmery royal blue [illegible]



GO for that certain glow in the iridescent green sunburst dress with touches of gold beadwork from Xtra Vittorio, and gold chain link earring by Izza Gonzalez-Alano. Shoes [illegible]



SPARKLE brighter than the tinsel in your tree in Patrice Ramos-Diaz's beaded top and gold brocade capri pants, and gold hoop earrings by Izza Gonzalez-Alano. Shoes, stylist's own.



ADD a so
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shoes.

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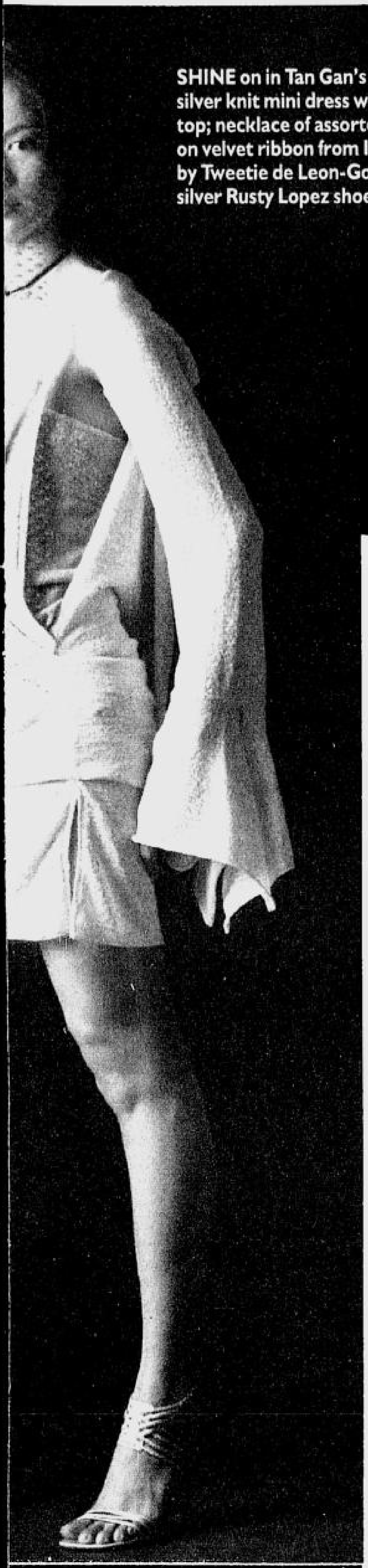
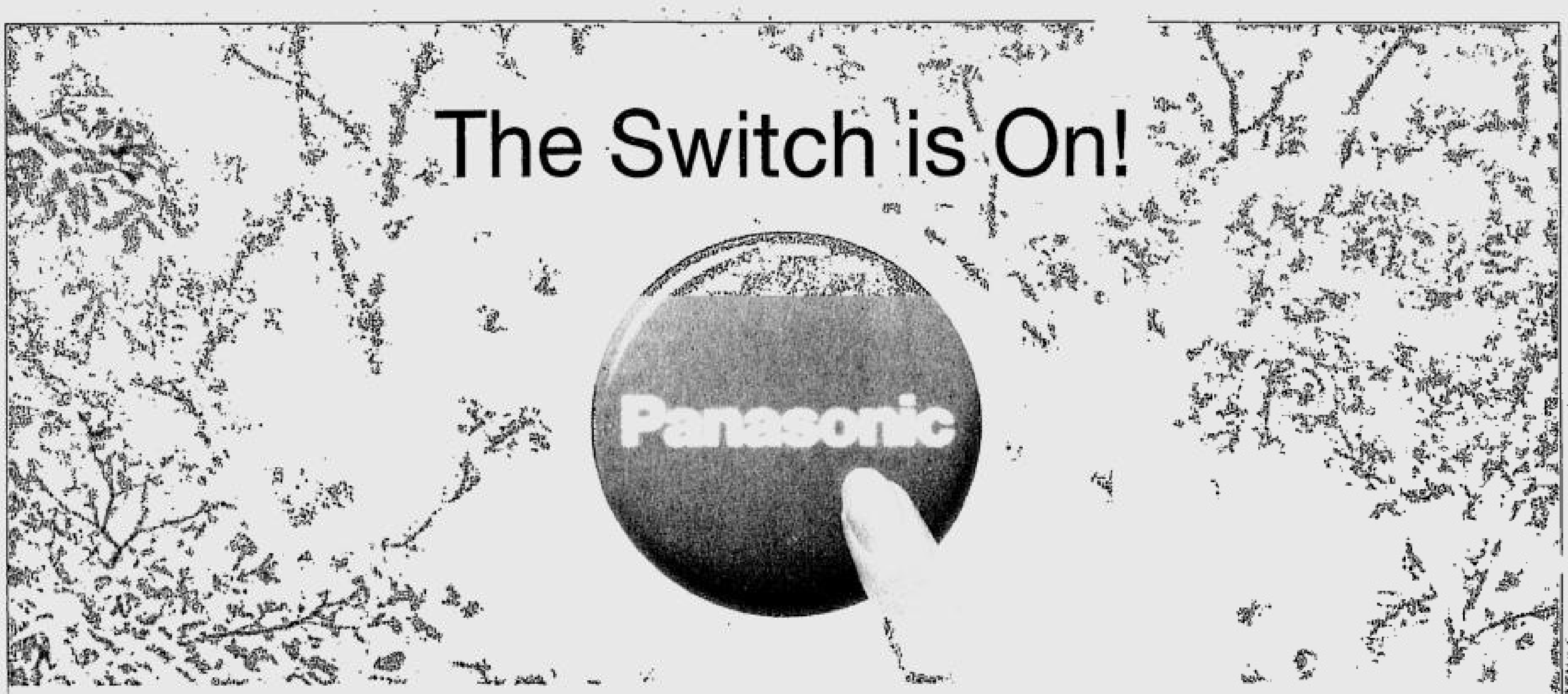


SHINE on in Tan Gan's white and silver knit mini dress with tube top; necklace of assorted crystals on velvet ribbon from Ice Crystals by Tweetie de Leon-Gonzalez; and silver Rusty Lopez shoes.

TIPPI Ocampo's flirty mini dress with satin and *piña* details is all you need to ante up your style wattage.

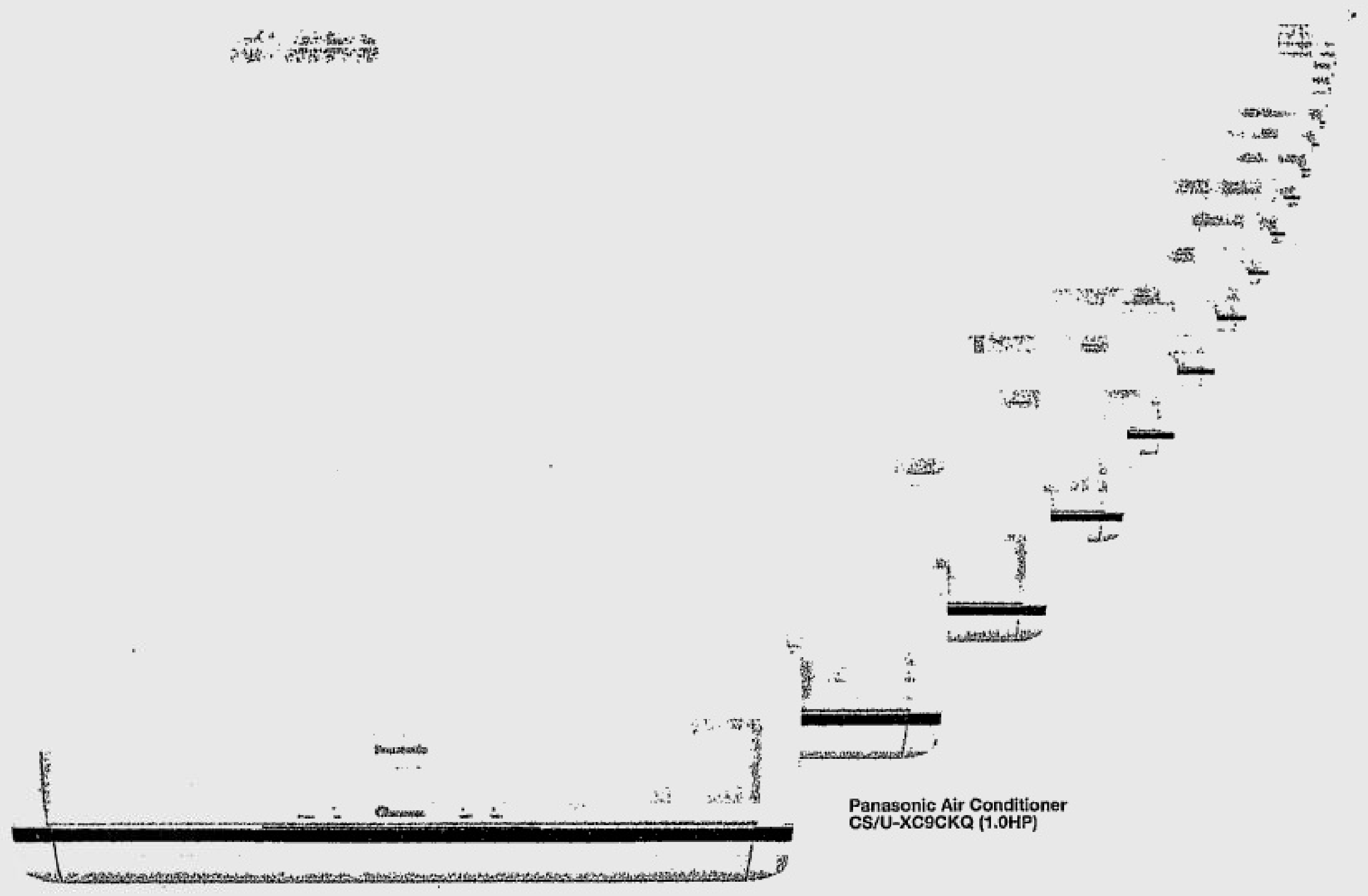
Photos: Tom Epperson
Styling: Donna Cuna-Pita
and Izza Gonzales-Agana
Hair and makeup: Pops de Guzman
Model: Eazel Don, PMAP

uch of drama to the season's festivities
Omaga Diaz's Victorian-inspired dress
ering appliqués, and gold Rusty Lopez



The Switch is On!

Breathe In from Your Own Oxygen Bar



Panasonic Air Conditioner
CS/U-XC9CKQ (1.0HP)

Pure Oxygen Generator
With Oxygen Shower Function that gives off filtered, pure oxygen and maintains the right oxygen concentration for healthy air.

Stress-free Ionizer
With Super Ionizer function that releases ions for a balanced air that keeps you feeling relaxed and refreshed.

Pollutants Filter Agents
Its Catechin filter made of Green Tea leaf eliminates dust, smoke and other air pollutants from your room.

Panasonic
ideas for life

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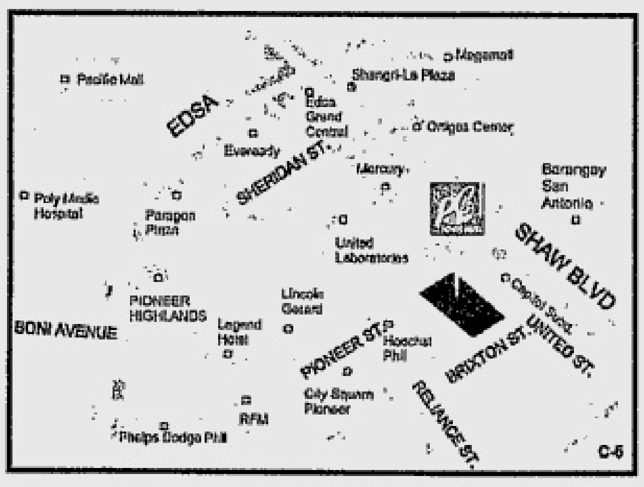
SUPERMART

Shop & Drive
An All New
Mitsubishi Lancer GLS
P500 Single Receipt Purchase = 1 Raffle Coupon

1st Prize = 2003 Mitsubishi Lancer GLS
2nd Prize = P20,000.00 worth of Pioneer Centre Gift Certificates
3rd Prize = P15,000.00 worth of Pioneer Centre Gift Certificates
Consolation Prizes = Pioneer Centre Gift Certificates



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See Posters for Complete Details!
Promo Period: July 08, 2003 to December 31, 2003
Per DTI - NCR Permit No. A2-235, Series of 2003.

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Nov 30 - Dec 20
JOIN our competition to win cash prizes!
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PRIZES AT STAKE
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P25,000
2nd place
P15,000
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Lantern-Making
Metro Manila Malls
SM City Pampanga
SM City Marilao
SM City Cebu
SM City Davao
SM City Cagayan de Oro

On-the-spot Belen-Making
SM City Lucena
SM City Iloilo

On-the-spot Christmas Tree-Making
SM City Baguio

Criteria for Judging:
(for all competitions)

Relevance to the theme "Cool Christmas"	25 points
Skillful use of Pepsi Products	25 points
Creativity & Originality	25 points
Over-All Impact	25 points
	100 points

MECHANICS
(Lantern-Making)
1. Contest is open to all interested individuals. One (1) entry per applicant only.
2. Entry submitted must be made using PEPSI products (Other materials may be used for accent)
3. Entry must not exceed 3ft. in length; 3ft. in width; and 3ft. in height.
4. Weight of entry must not be over 5kg.
5. All entries must be submitted not later than 5pm of Dec. 18, 2003 at the SCMC Mall Administration Office c/o Marketing Department.
6. Once entry has been submitted, no one is allowed to add to – or take out anything – from the entry.

Schedule

Deadline for Submission of Entries	DEC 18
Judging of Entries	DEC 20
Announcement of winners	DEC 21

MECHANICS
(for On-the-spot Belen-Making & Christmas Tree-Making)
1. Contest is open to all interested individuals: Groups of three (3) / Only one (1) entry per group
2. Entry must be made using PEPSI products (Other materials may be used for accent).
3. Contestants must work within the given area of 4ft x 4ft
4. Entry must be mounted on-the-spot.
5. Each group must pre-register with the Marketing Officer in charge and must submit the following:
- Duly accomplished Application Forms of the contestants.
- List of all materials and other gadgets to be used. Clearance and approval of the Marketing Officer is required for any other materials not included in the list.
- Lending / borrowing of materials from any other groups is strictly prohibited.
6. In a short white bond paper, the group must sketch the image of how their finished entry will look like.
7. All pre-requirements must be placed in a short brown envelope and personally submitted on or before 5pm of Dec 18 at the SCMC Administration c/o Marketing Department.
Registration is on a first come-first served basis.

Schedule (Dec 20)

Call Time / Briefing	10:00 am
Contest Proper	10:30 am - 4:00 pm
Judging	4:30 pm
Announcement / Awarding of Winners	5:00 pm

GOINGS ON

'Return of the King' advance screening

HOPE for Cancer Cure Foundation brings the highly anticipated final installment of J.R.R. Tolkien's "Lord of the Rings" trilogy. Know Middle Earth trivia and win specially crafted LOTR-inspired rings at the Middle Earth Ring Hunt Café Lupe, Makati on Dec. 20, 1-4 p.m.

Then witness the advance screening of "Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King" at Teatro Aguinaldo, Camp Aguinaldo on Dec. 22, 6 p.m.

Both events will feature the street magic of Erik Mana. Sponsors are Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office, iAcademy, Café Lupe, Informatics Computer Institute (Megamall), Heart to Heart Marketing, Equitable PCI Bank, Oishi, Smint, Saladix, Cofrutos and Molinera Juices, Listerine Mouthwash and Pocket Packs, Tower Records, Music One, Kiddie Pharmaton, Fernandina 88 Suites, Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation, Pacific Internet and the PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER's Lifestyle Section. Beneficiaries are Hope's indigent cancer patients.

Check out www.hope.ph or call Events Consortium Inc. at 9254972.

PACES-SAKAMOTO Phils. recently awarded its first franchise in the country to Mother Goose Nursery School, where Sakamoto Math classes will be offered starting January 2004. In line with this, a Sakamoto Math seminar will be held on Dec. 6 at Mother Goose Nursery School grounds at 159 Don Manuel Aggregado St., QC. Call 7120707, 4161637 or e-mail mothergoosenursery@lycos.com

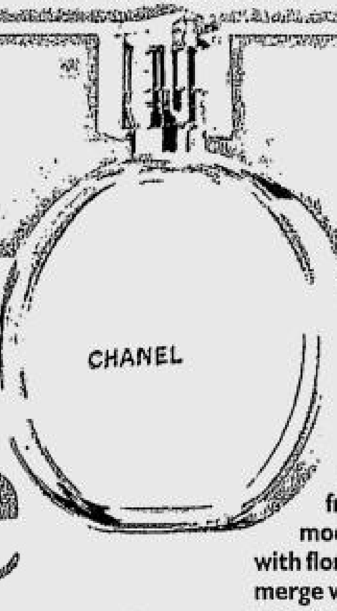
SEMINAR. The Association of Administrators of Hospitality, Hotel and Restaurant Management Educational Institutions will hold a seminar on hospitality education until Dec. 13 at Westin Philippine Plaza Hotel. Call 4043774, 0917-9930999 or e-mail aahrmei@edsamail.com.ph.

CHORAL COMPETITION. The Ever Gotesco malls celebrate the Christmas season with the chorale competition "Himig ng Pasko, an Ever-Wonderful Christmas" on Dec. 13, 4 p.m. at Ever Gotesco Ortigas. The competition was launched last Dec. 6 at Ever Gotesco Commonwealth with a performance by the Coro Carmelo. The proclamation of the winner will be on Dec. 21, 4 p.m. at the same venue. Registration is still open. Call 9264361 or 0917-6303250.

SALE. Shop till you drop with Jag Jeans' campus sale until Dec. 16, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., at the Benitez Alumni Center in U.P. Diliman, Quezon City. Enjoy up to 70-percent discounts on all Jag items, from trendy tank tops and baby tees to low-waist jeans and mini-skirts, which are perfect for school wear or for everyday adventures with friends. You can also get great gift-giving stuff at bargain prices—a real wise Christmas shopping deal with Jag Jeans.

LIFESTYLE

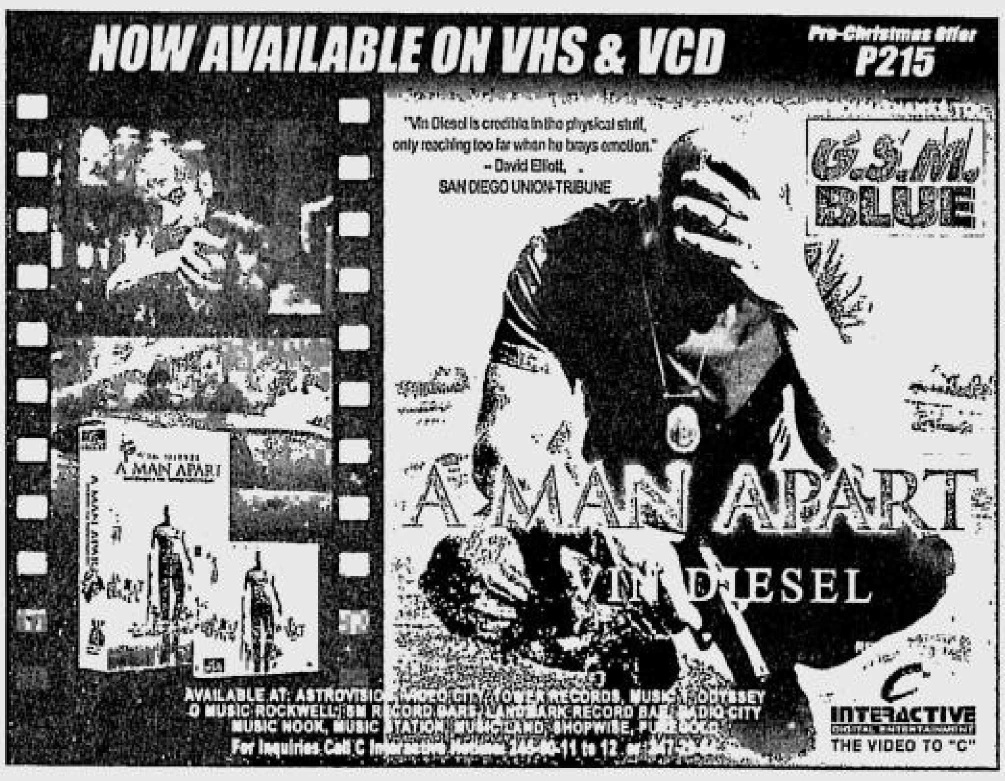
SPARKLE!



Scent your way to style

Your fragrance says a lot about your sentiments

PARTIAL to floral scents? Try Chanel Chance, an extremely fresh and modern scent with floral notes that merge with sensual, sweet and spicy elements.



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- David Elliott,
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> *"OF ALL the senses, none surely is so mysterious as that of smell... the nature of the emanations that stir it to activity is still unknown... its effect upon the psyche are both wide and deep, at once obvious and subtle."*—**Dr. D. McKenzie from "Study of Smells"**

APPLES' PICKINGS

Apples Aberin-Sadhwani

NEVER underestimate the power of scent and the images it can evoke. With a whiff of a familiar fragrance, memories may be unlocked or emotions awakened. Just as one's manner of dressing and behavior can express one's sentiments or moods and leave a lasting impression, so can the fragrance one wears.

No wonder there is an abundance of perfume choices in the market today. Open any magazine and you'll see countless advertisements of different scents projecting distinct emotions, images or ideals. A radiant Carolyn Murphy is dressed in bridal white for Esteé Lauder Beautiful, an ethereal goddess holds a bottle of Omnia by Bulgari while a sultry temptress pitches Sicily by Dolce and Gabbana.

That's not all. Enter any department store here or abroad and you'll encounter a slew of upscale hawkers trying to sell the latest fragrance. Perfume pioneer Francis Coty was right on the money when he said "Give a woman the best product you can compound. Present it in a container of simple, but impeccable taste, charge a reasonable price for it and a great business will arise such as the world has never seen."

The problem is that choosing the right scent can be quite confusing. How do you determine if a particular fragrance suits you? What is the difference between colognes, Eau de Toilettes and perfumes? What exactly should one know before making a final choice?

A matter of taste... er, smell

It's all quite subjective, really. A particular scent might smell enticing on your friend or sister but hardly on you. Different factors such as body odor, diet and acidity (PH level) affect the reaction of a particular perfume on one's body. The point is you have to go out there and actually try on the product, as finding the perfect perfume can very well be a case of trial and error.

To trim down your choices, it will help to know what specific scents please you. If you are partial to flowery fragrances, then start checking out perfumes that are floral-based like Keiko Mecheri's Fleurs D'Osmanthus or Chanel Chance, a surprising bouquet of sweet, spicy and sensual elements.

If you are drawn to fruity scents, try L'Occitane's Orange Leaves essential oil Eau de Cologne. Or if you have a penchant for musky perfumes, try L'Artisan Parfumeur's Mure et Musc, a combination of blackberry, musk and red fruits.

It's best to try on just one product at a time so you can avoid olfactory overload. Dab or spray it on your pulse points (the inner wrist

SCENT/ H3

CAN'T find a scent you love? Check out Enjoy by Jean Patou, Angel Schlesser Femme or Acqua di Genova.

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PROMO MECHANICS:

[1] Promo Period is from December 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004. [2] Cardholders must use their BDO MasterCard during the promo period and accumulate a spending of at least P5,000 to qualify for the first P500 Big Spender Rebate. [3] Accumulated spending of P10,000 or more during the promo period will entitle the cardholder to the second P500 rebate. [4] If a cardholder posts a total spending of P10,000 or more in one Statement of Account (SOA), he/she will be entitled to a one-time P1,000 Big Spender Rebate. [5] Cash advance transactions and other BDO Card-initiated fees and charges are not included. [6] The rebate will be credited and posted to the account after two statement cycles, from the time the required spending amount was reached. [7] Account must be in active and current status at the time of rebate crediting. [8] The maximum total rebate amount is P1,000. [9] Should an account turn past due for two consecutive months, the rebate entitlement will be forfeited. [10] This promo offer is non-transferable and not convertible to cash.
PROMO PERIOD: Dec. 1, 2003 to Mar. 31, 2004

Per DTI-NCR Permit # 3531, Series of 2003

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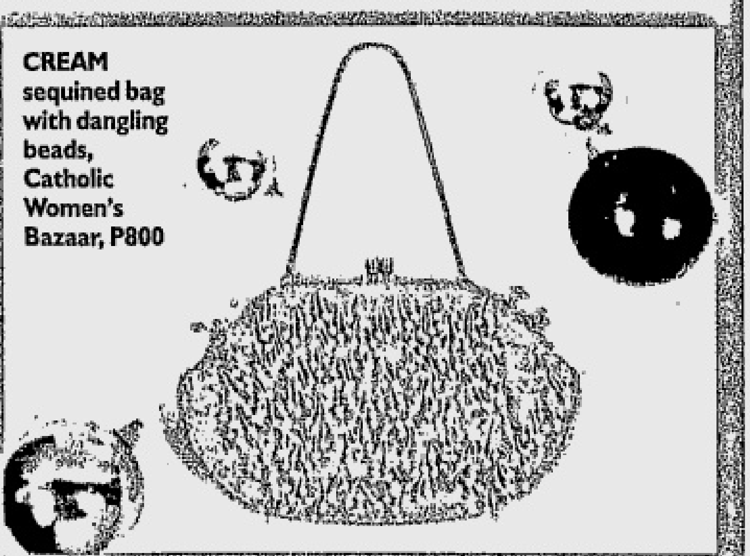
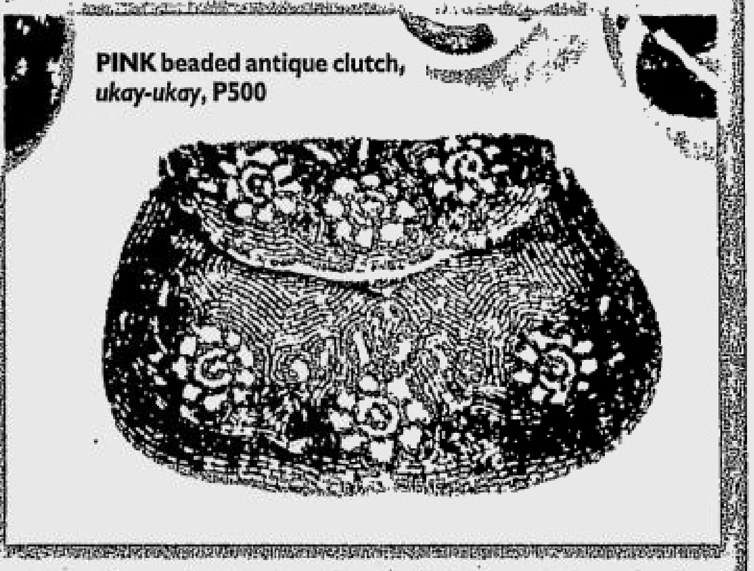
MULTIHUED beaded wristlet, Catholic Women's Bazaar, P400

GOLD beaded antique bag, *ukay-ukay*, P1,000

WHITE Albetario hand bag with gold beadwork, Rustan's, P1,650

SILVER leather bag, Rafe New York, P13,799


CREAM sequined bag with dangling beads, Catholic Women's Bazaar, P800


PINK beaded antique clutch, *ukay-ukay*, P500

PERFECT PICKS:

pretty purses and fab party shoes

Text and styling by Ria Francisco
Photos by Dakila Angeles

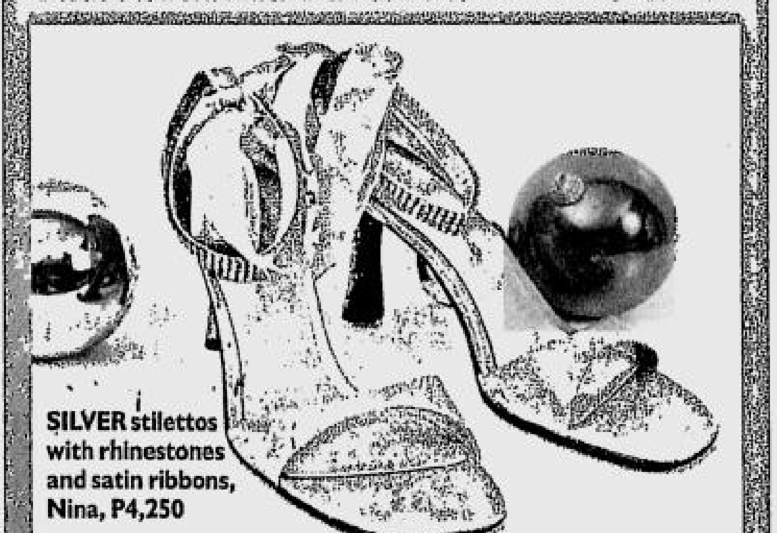
THIS Christmas, you need not spend a fortune to look your holiday best. Recycling an old outfit is not the major fashion faux pas that it used to be—if you choose the right accessories. The key is to update your look with choice pieces that can take you from work to any get-together.

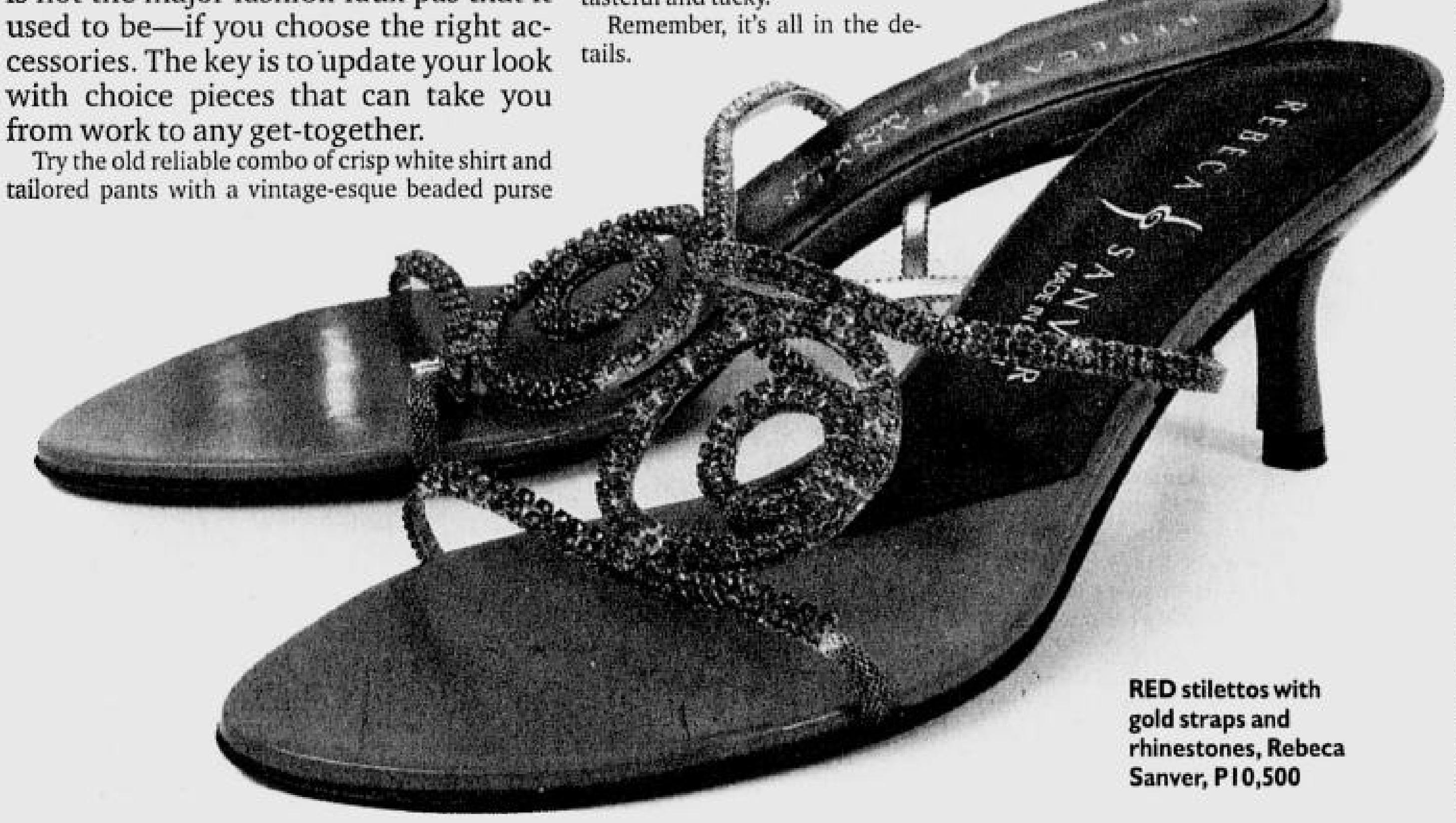
Try the old reliable combo of crisp white shirt and tailored pants with a vintage-esque beaded purse and bejeweled kitten heels. Or revitalize the little black dress with silver sandals accentuated with pretty satin bows.

A simple outfit is easy to adorn with standout accessories, so don't be afraid to experiment. And although Christmas gives us the license to indulge, a little restraint spells the difference between tasteful and tacky.

Remember, it's all in the details.

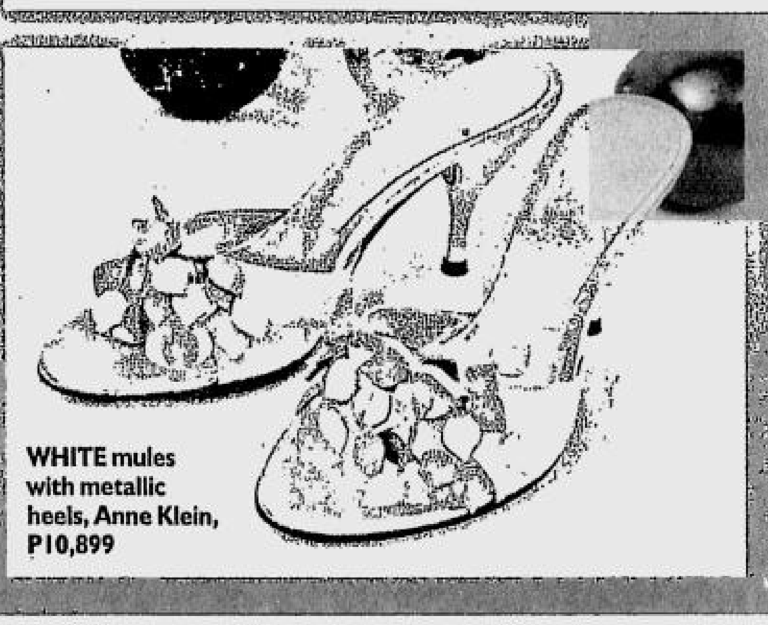
BRONZE heels with silver straps and rhinestone flowers, Lady Rustans, P1,950


SILVER stilettos with rhinestones and satin ribbons, Nina, P4,250



RED stilettos with gold straps and rhinestones, Rebeca Sanver, P10,500

BRONZE heels with rhinestones, Rustan's, P1,950


WHITE mules with metallic heels, Anne Klein, P10,899

GOLD heels with rhinestones, Nina, P4,250

LAYERING is key to making fragrance linger. Most perfume companies manufacture complementary products such as soaps, bath gels and lotions which you can use to accentuate your scent. Try L'Occitane en Provence's line of L'Oranges bath and body products.

Scents . . .

From page H1

is best) and let it rest for a while, as the scent will still change according to your body chemistry.

Fragrance facts

It might also be advantageous to know that perfumes are composed of three notes, namely, top, middle and bottom notes. The top notes evaporate the fastest (about 5-10 minutes) and is the first scent you whiff as you apply the perfume. Middle notes emerge about 15 minutes after application and can last up to an hour or more while bottom notes are the heavier ingredients and lasts for several hours. Basically, all three notes, though distinct, blend together to create a unique scent.

If you still like a particular scent after about an hour, then go ahead and purchase a bottle. Or why not ask for sampler bottles, which you can use for a few days? You can also ask your friends to help you decide but it is ultimately and always your preference that matters.

You should also know the difference between perfume, Eau de Parfum, Eau de Toilette and Eau de Cologne to have a better idea of which product will meet your needs and suit you best. The difference lies in the concentration of oils in the fragrance. The highest concentration is in perfume, followed by Eau de Parfum, Eau de Toilette and lastly, cologne, although the two preceding forms are generally interchangeable.

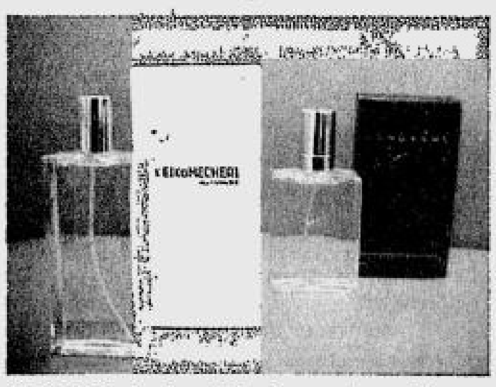
Perfumes are stronger and last longer while Eau de Parfums and Eau de Toilettes or colognes are lighter. You might want to reserve the use of perfume for your evening affairs while using the lighter versions for work or casual events.

Applying scents

When applying your perfume, spritz or dab it on your pulse points like the inner wrist, behind your ears, on your neck and even behind your knees. To make it last even longer, try layering your fragrance. Normally, fragrance companies offer products like bath gels, lotions or powders, which you can use to accentuate your scent. A light spray on the hair can also last all day. And if you want a more subtle scent, spray the perfume directly above and in front of you and simply walk into the mist as it showers down.

Be careful not to get perfume stains on clothing and beware of perfume overload; this is a definite a no-no and is akin to a fashion victim piling on all the trends. More important, remember that your perfume should always complement, not overpower, your style and personality.

E-mail the author at apsadvice@hotmail.com



KEIKO Mecheri and Gendarme, two of the latest high-end scents that are available in the local market.

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N°5
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PARIS
PARFUM

TIMELESS Chanel No. 5 is the perfect choice for the feminine and sophisticated woman.

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 2735, series 2003.

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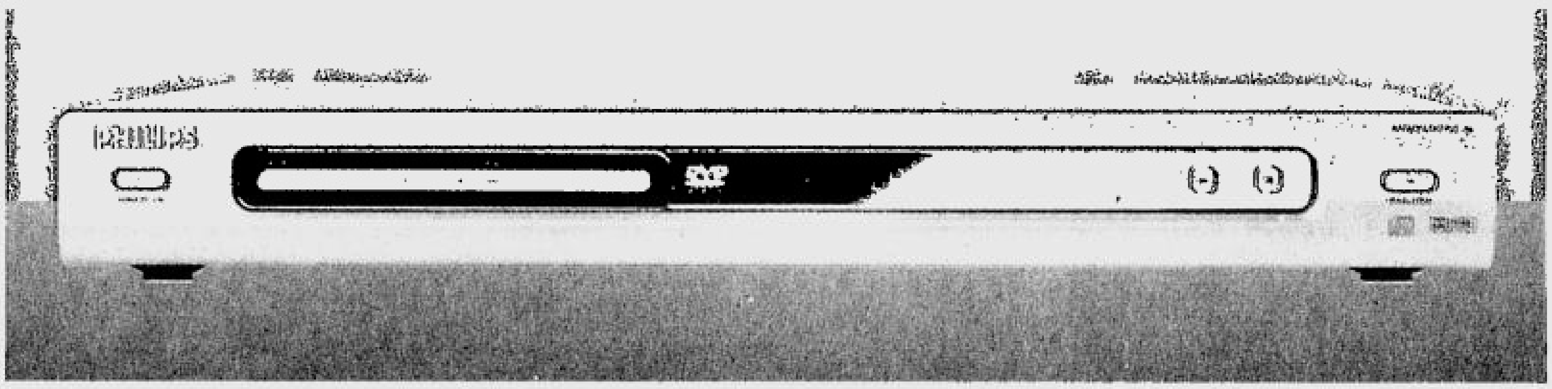

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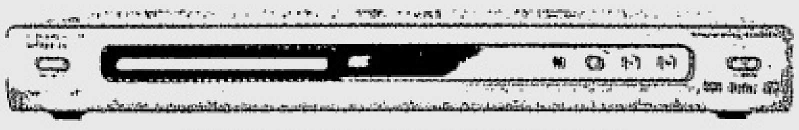

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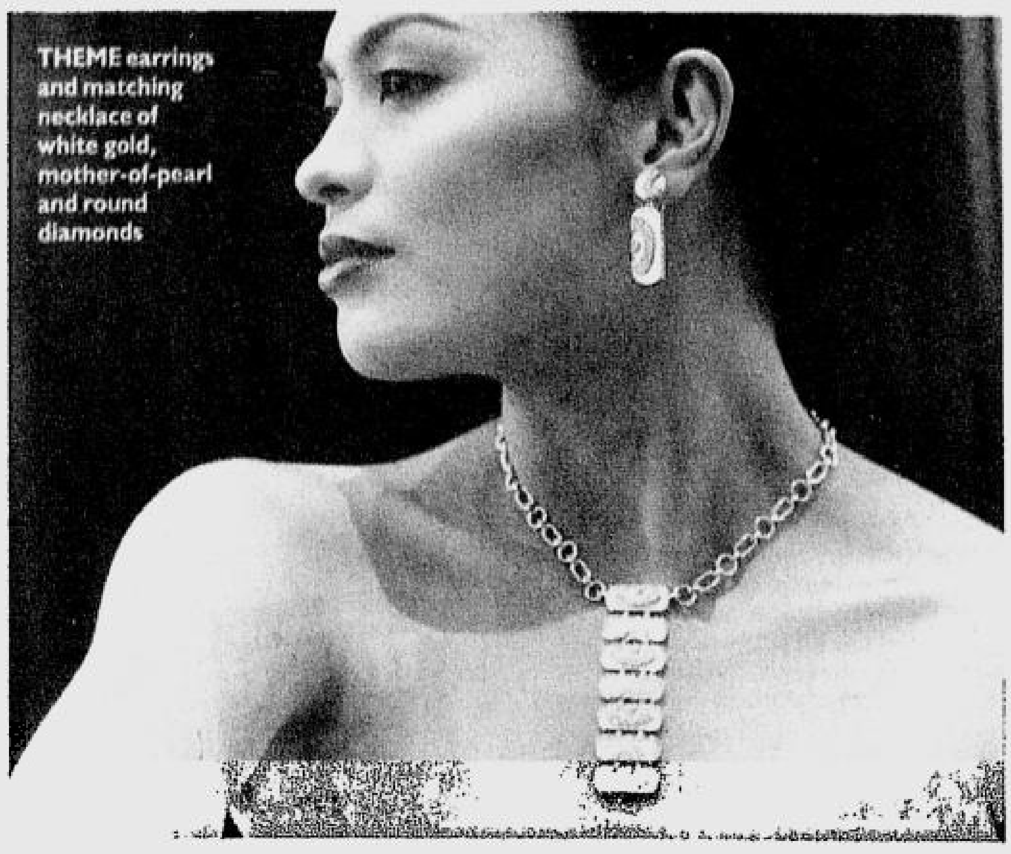
Promo Period: October 1 to November 30, 2003

PHILIPS
Let's make things better.

Precious baubles for precious season

Bulgari's rainbow-bright collections whip up a seductive Christmas

THEME drop earrings and bracelet of yellow gold and hydrogrossular garnet



THEME earrings and matching necklace of white gold, mother-of-pearl and round diamonds

PHOTOS:
JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN
HAIR AND MAKEUP:
JEOFF MORAN
OF EMPHASIS SALON
MODEL: ISABEL ROCES, PMAP
SHOT ON LOCATION
AT THE RED RESTAURANT
IN THE MAKATI SHANGRI-LA
HOTEL MANILA

THOSE in the market for magnificent, jaw-dropping Christmas presents, will do well to check out the latest offerings from Bulgari. Imagine five strands of kaleidoscopic gemstones or a stylized sunburst encircling a swan-like neck and you'll get a pretty picture of Bulgari's latest pieces, consisting of two distinct but equally modern and glamorous collections. In a departure from ultra-traditional designs, the world-renowned jewelry house presents Sassi, an installment of the feminine and playfully elegant Allegra collection; and Theme 2003, a limited-edition collection that embodies a retro-modern elegance.

The Allegra collection, which was successfully launched in Manila in June of this year, featured an unconventional but joyful collection of rainbow-bright semiprecious stones, fancy pearls and diamonds in settings that were in perpetual motion—tumbling and tinkling in an attempt at brilliant seduction.

As part of that collection, Sassi exemplifies much of the same qualities, including a certain lightness of being and positive energy brought about by the power of gemstones.

What makes Sassi even more special is the fact that no two pieces are exactly alike. Each stone is unlike any other so one is assured of owning an extraordinary piece that is as unique and distinctive as its wearer.

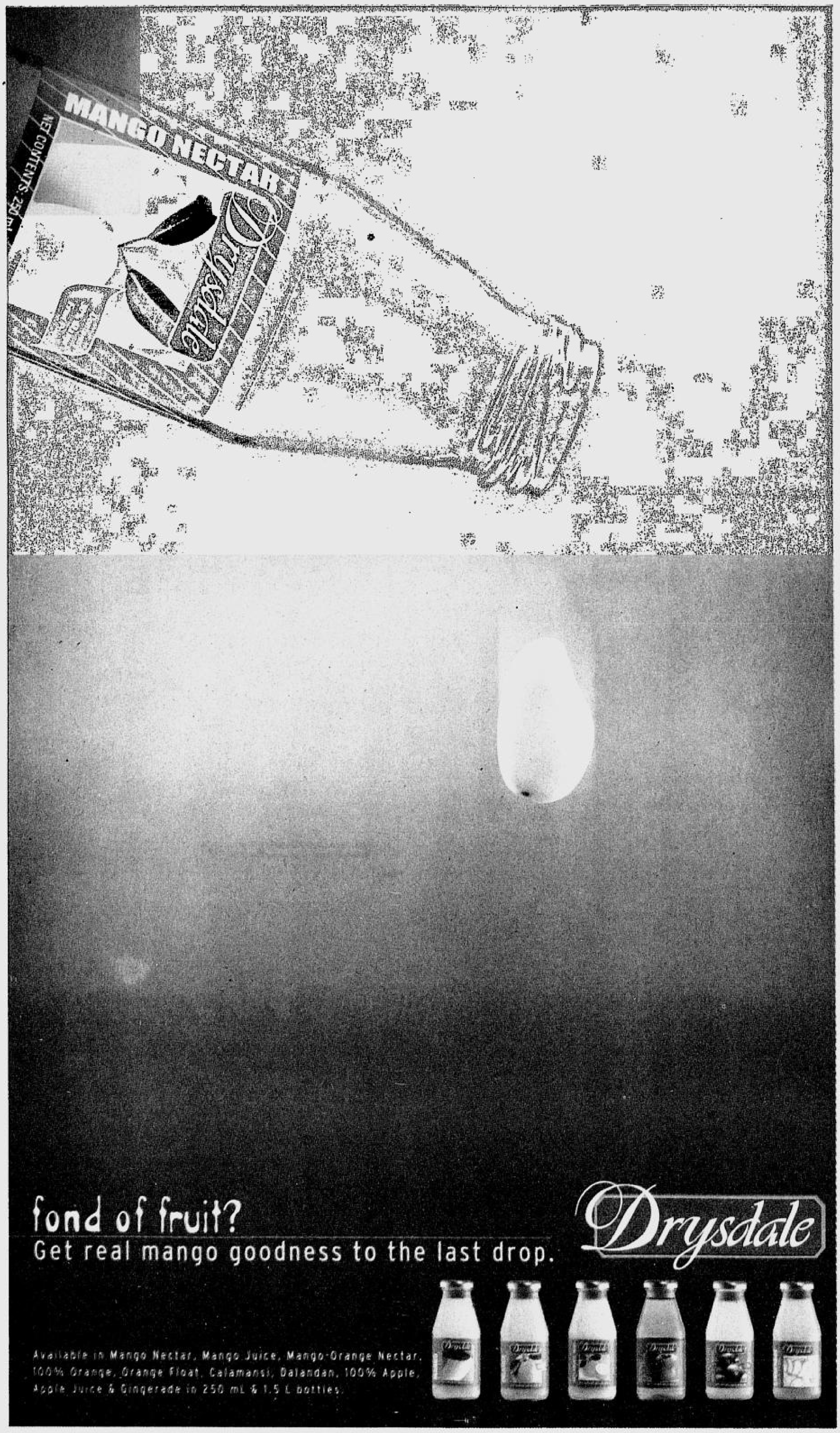
Theme 2003, on the other hand, is an amalgam of things past and of avant-garde creativity. Inspired by Bulgari's '70s-style designs, the collection is especially dedicated to women whose intimate self goes beyond the limits of tradition.

Characterized by creative modern shapes decorated with a daring and unique combination of materials such as mother of pearl, rhodonite and hydrogrossular garnet with hues like pink and leaf green, the collection represents contemporary eclectic romanticism, which is at once a delicate and daring expression of feminine exuberance, combined with a colorful, lighthearted touch.

Both collections, though different in nature and appearance, are perfect for the confident and sophisticated woman. So whether you are a man looking to buy your true love an exquisite gift or a woman searching for that perfect holiday bauble, choice picks from the Sassi and Theme collections will make a memorable holiday even more unforgettable.

Bulgari boutiques are located at Greenbelt 4 and 6750.

FROM THE SASSI collection, a five-strand necklace of cabochon cut semiprecious stones, pearls and diamonds set in 18-k yellow gold



Available in Mango Nectar, Mango Juice, Mango-Orange Nectar, 100% Orange, Orange Float, Calamansi, Dalandan, 100% Apple, Apple Juice & Gingerade in 250 mL & 1.5 L bottles.

LIFESTYLE

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SPARKLE!

RAFA Kiefer, Philippine representative to the Best Model of the World competition in Turkey, plays the modern-day dandy in Vittorio's spirograph printed polo, preppy argyle sweater and pinstriped trousers.

Pretty—and manly—in pink

Ortiz, Nocom and Barba are happy that Pinoy males have become more fashion-adventurous

Text by Alex Y. Vergara
Photos by Xander Angeles

THREE of the country's top fashion designers have more reasons to smile these days. After years of coaxing Pinoy males to be more daring with their clothes, a growing number of men have begun to add a dash of offbeat colors, cuts and silhouettes to their wardrobes.

But Randy Ortiz, Vic Barba and Anthony Nocom aren't about to rest on their laurels in their attempts to further push the envelope, especially this holiday season. They may cater to different sectors of the market, but their respective thrusts seem to point to one direction: to make uptight Filipino dressers loosen up by offering them more options.

Ortiz (tel. 9228375) caters to the made-to-order market. Besides using a wider range of soft fabrics such as viscose and rayon for his suits, he has added more luscious shades—from blues to neon—for his shirts.

"The look is still luxurious without looking too stiff," says Ortiz, who first made a name in the business as a men's wear designer. "My pea coats, for instance, can double as rain jackets as they're less formal and structured."

In lieu of neckties, Ortiz has combined similar and contrasting panels of prints and patterns to jazz up his shirts. One shirt, for instance, combines such disparate prints as floral, stripes and checks. He has also added several twists to his tuxedo shirts with French cuffs by varying the pleats and collars' shapes and sizes.

"One can be experimental without looking too avant-garde," he says. "It's simply a matter of coming up with the right mix."

But not all can afford to hire the services of designers. Nocom occupies the opposite end

PRETTY/13

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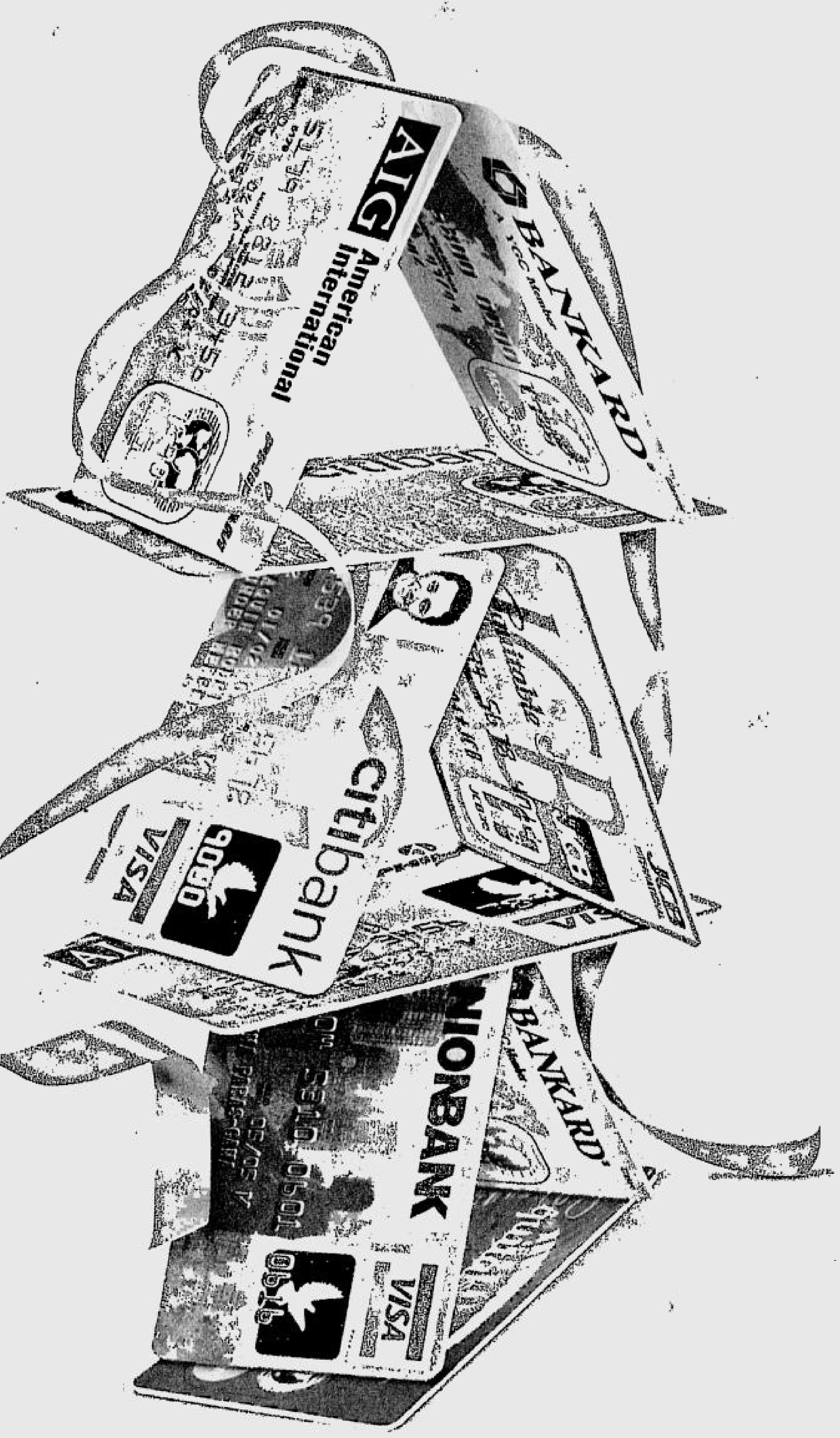

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Manila's makeup mavens paint holiday trends

Have yourself a merry little makeover and update your look with three fabulous forecasts from top local makeup artists

Christmas angels

Style-meister Henri Calayag focuses on flawlessly glowing skin and effortless day makeup that can be easily transformed into an evening look. With the use of only the best products in the market, Henri created thoroughly alluring yet completely unaffected looks for his two angels.

Get that look:

Angel Aquino's dewy daytime look

Skin: Prep your skin by applying Esteé Lauder's Idealist Skin Refinisher, which smoothens skin; and Chanel Precision Eclat Original Maximum Radiance Cream for extra luminescence.

Next, layer Chanel Teint Compact Crème Universal Multi-Vitamin Fresh Cream makeup with SPF 15 and Chanel Vitalumiere Satin Smoothing Fluid Makeup with SPF 15. Don't worry about piling on all these products, as the effect is still natural.

Eyes: For a touch of shimmer, sweep on Stila Eye Glaze, a cream-to-powder eye shadow; and Stephanemarais Luminizer on your lids and under the eyes. To contour, simply add on Stephanemarais Eye Shadow Gloss on the folds of your eyelids. Curl your lashes for a wide-eyed effect and skip the mascara for a more casual look.

Henri suggests that you use your fingertips to apply concealer and eye shadow, as the heat will help blend and emulsify cream or liquid makeup.

Cheeks: To contour, use Chanel Aquablush Waterlights Sheer Cheeks in Coraline right below your cheek bones. To create a natural blush, apply Chanel Aquablush Waterlights Sheer Cheeks in Rose on the apples of your cheeks.

Lips: Add a tinge of color with Chanel's Hydrasoleil Lip Gloss.

Angel Jacob's subtle evening shine

Skin: Henri recommends a semi-matte face to balance off your glittering evening finery. To achieve this, simply brush on loose powder on the above-mentioned daytime finish.

Eyes: Emphasize your pretty daytime peepers by lining your eyes (inside and outside the rims) with L'Oreal Pencil Perfect Eye Pencil in Golden Bronze. You can also use the same creamy pencil to contour by applying and blending it on the folds of your lids. For highlights, add Stephanemarais' silvery white Iceland eye shadow on your brow bone, just below your eyebrows. Finish off with Awake Mascara to thicken your lashes.

Lips: Nars Lip Laquer in Vagabond is perfect for understated evening polish.

Hair: Keep your look effortless by sweeping distressed curls into a soft twist.

Festive glow

Makeup expert Patrick Rosas' creates a cheerful mélange of shimmering tutti-frutti colors on Orange Aberin's tanned skin for a fresh and pretty Christmas look.

Get that look:

Skin: For an off-season sun-kissed look, use a cream bronzer on moisturized skin.

Eyes: Apply Urban Decay eye shadow in Acid Rain on your eyelids and under the eyes. Use a little more of the same shade on the inner eyes to create a bit of drama. Then, line rims with Mac Eye Kohl in Ivy to create intensity. For a shock of color, apply purple YSL Mascara Aquaresistant on curled lashes.

Cheeks: Use a blush in a coral shade to accentuate your healthy glow.

Lips: Nivea Caregloss and Shine in Coral is all you need to complete your picture-perfect holiday look.

Midas touch

"Go gold and celebrate the holidays in style," says trendsetter Jing Monis, who transformed gorgeous Wilma Doesnt into a glittering yuletide goddess.

Get that look:

Skin: Simply use moisturizer and a bronzer to achieve glowing, golden skin.

Eyes: Sweep on Shu Uemura yellow gold eye shadow on the whole lid and under the eyes. Then add metallic gold eye shadow on the inner lids. Contour with the use of several colors like bronze, brown and maroon, blended together to suit your skin tone. For a stronger look, line lower and upper rims with black kohl eyeliner and create highlights with a sweep of gold eye shadow on the brow bones. For added intensity, add individual false eyelashes, apply mascara and line upper lash lines with liquid eyeliner.

Cheeks: Use a natural creamy blush on the apples of your cheeks.

Lips: Any nude, shiny lipgloss will complement your golden glow.

Final touch: Brush on Tony and Tina's Spirit Guide Golden Glitter on your face, hair, neck, shoulders and chest for added sparkle.

PHOTOS: JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN
MAKEUP: HENRI CALAYAG OF H SALON, JING MONIS OF PROPAGANDA AND PATRICK ROSAS
MODELS: ORANGE ABERIN, ANGEL AQUINO, WILMA DOESNT AND ANGEL JACOB

Post-party face cleansing

MAKEOVER 911

Kinny Salas

SO many women are renewing their ties with their dermatologists these days. It seems that with all the Christmas parties and club promotions going on, women are having so much fun piling on the latest makeup colors and trends. Unfortunately they don't share the same enthusiasm about taking it all off in the evening and just rely on soap and water, if they even remember to clean their faces. The results are rashes, dull skin tone, acne and broken eyelashes.

If you really want to look great, you must remember that it is all about good skin, and proper cleansing is an integral part of it.

Step 1—Eye (and lip) makeup removers are designed to gently remove long-lasting waterproof mascara that cling stubbornly to the skin. We love their staying power but hate the broken lashes or mouth-area acne we get from the residue our cleansers don't remove.

Place an ample amount on cotton pad or tissue and gently apply on the eye area starting from eyebrows and wiping downwards till below the eye area. Sandwich lashes in tissue or pad and gently rub and pull away to remove all mascara. For eyeliner apply to cotton swab and sweep over lined eyes. Sweep over lips to wipe off.

Step 2—Face cleanser. Makeup cannot be removed by soap and water alone. Washing needs something emollient (slightly greasy) to lift off all that layers of pore-clogging pigment and oils, not to mention grime that you accumulated from the whole day. Dry skin will benefit from cleansing or cold creams that remove dirt while hydrating. Normal skin will enjoy cleansing milks, and very oily to acne-prone will love gel cleansers that lift off oil without leaving the skin greasy. Creams have to be tissued off but milks and gels can be rinsed with water.

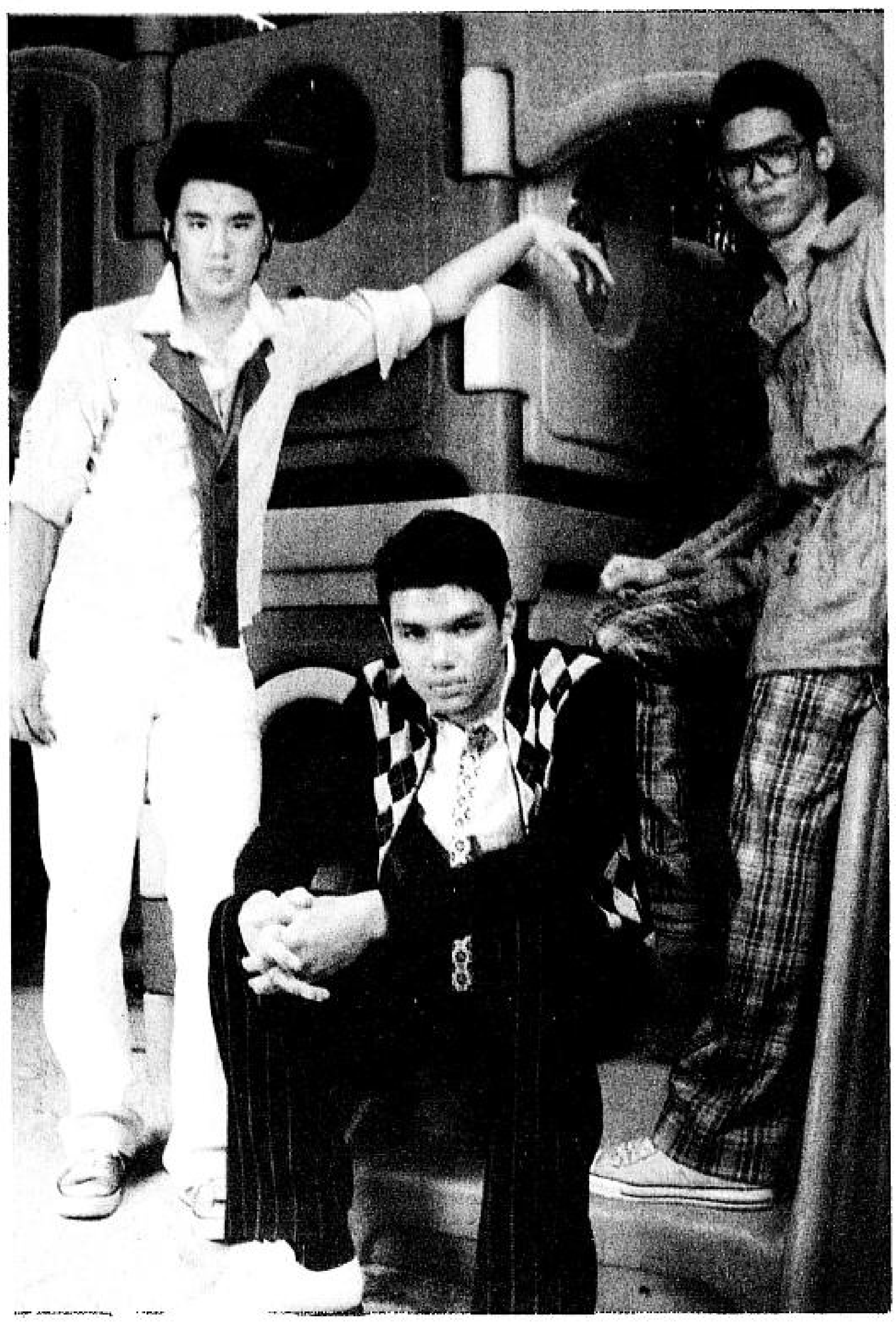
Step 3—Toner. This preps up your skin for any treatment you will apply after to restore skin health, eliminate wrinkles or acne. This also serves to sweep off any dirt or makeup residue your cleanser may have missed.

Step 4—Hydration or treatments. Even greasy skin can dehydrate so one needs moisturizers, serums or gels to seal in water and help fight skin antagonists and aid repair.

For the extra lazy who we all know exist: Cosmetic companies have created products for shortcuts. Cleansing oils designed for different skin types lift all make-up when applied on dry skin. Rinsed off and emulsified with water, the process also tones and moisturizes the skin, leaving your face clean but not stripped or greasy. The famous ones are Shu Uemura (four formulas for different skin types), MAC (for normal to very dry skin), L'Occitane (for normal to oily), and Awake (for normal, combination and dry).

Cleansing cloths that also tone, exfoliate and moisturize are those by Oil of Olay, Biore, Shiseido Pureness and MAC. Just scrub on face and neck and collapse in bed. Portable and wakes you up for the drive home, too.

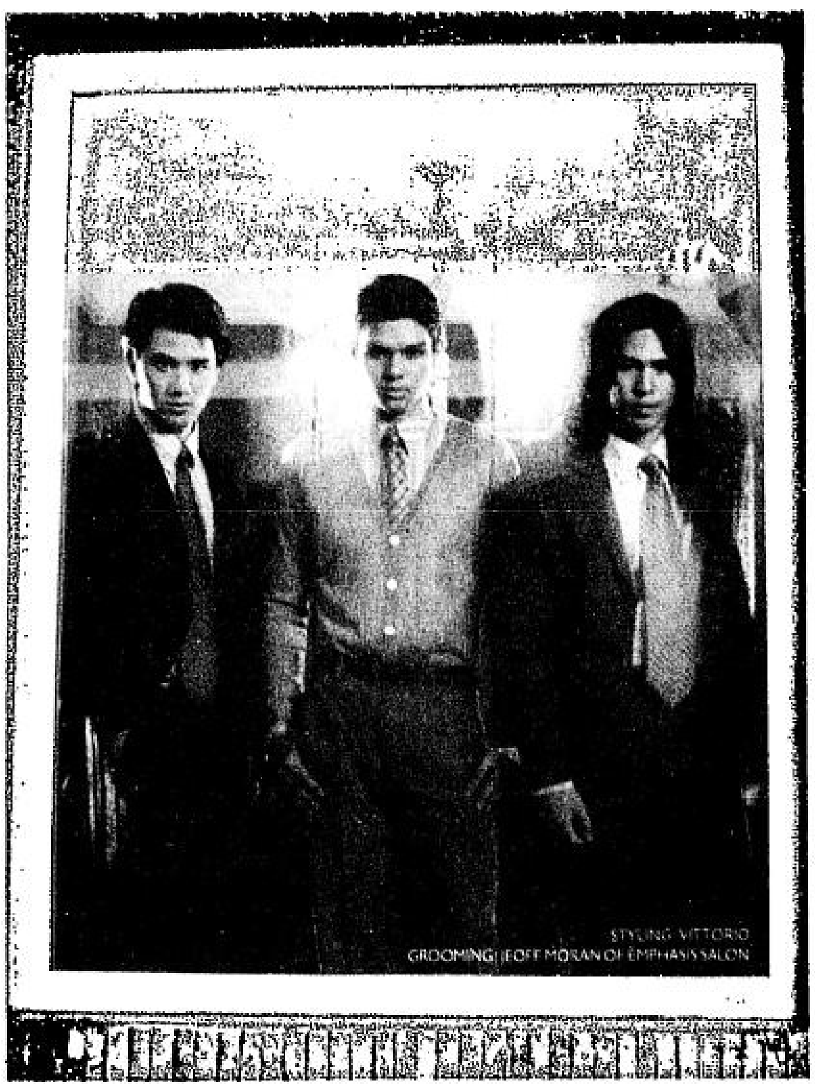
Murad's Vitalic skincare set cuts a six-step procedure into three easy steps. The liquid-to-mousse cleanser removes makeup and also tones, but you will need eye makeup remover for waterproof mascara and liner. The second-step, non-greasy emulsion treats and repairs any skin damage and the moisturizer hydrates and protects.



ADD cheer to any occasion by combining whimsical prints, patterns and textures, and mixing bright intoxicating hues. From left to right: pink mosaic cotton top, white pique jersey pants and stylized tie collar; printed cotton polo with built-in tie, argyle sweater and pinstriped trousers; gold knit turtleneck, glazed crinkled cotton trench coat, plaid pants; all by Vittorio, available by order or at Sari-Sari.

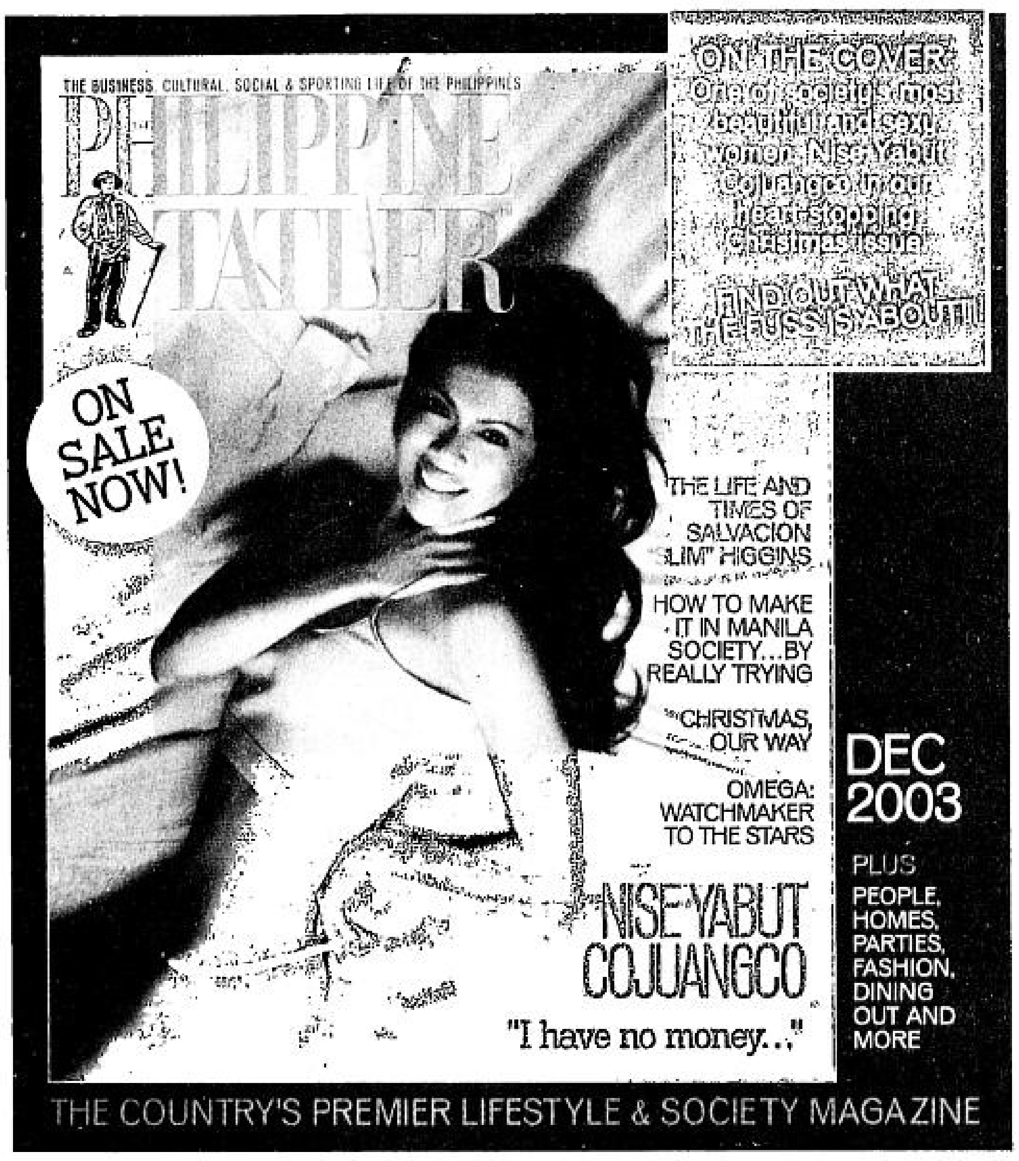
Pretty—and manly—in pink

From page 11


STYLING VITTORIO
GROOMING JEOFF MORAN OF EMPHASIS SALON

THE CONSERVATIVE professional can liven up his holiday wardrobe by matching basic pieces with colorful tops and printed ties. From left to right: basic black two-button suit, dove blue striped button down shirt and patterned maroon tie; striped long-sleeve polo shirt, dove blue cardigan, plaid tie and olive trousers; grey three-button suit, peach long-sleeved polo and patterned tan tie, all by Anthony Nocom, available at the SM men's department.

PRETTY/14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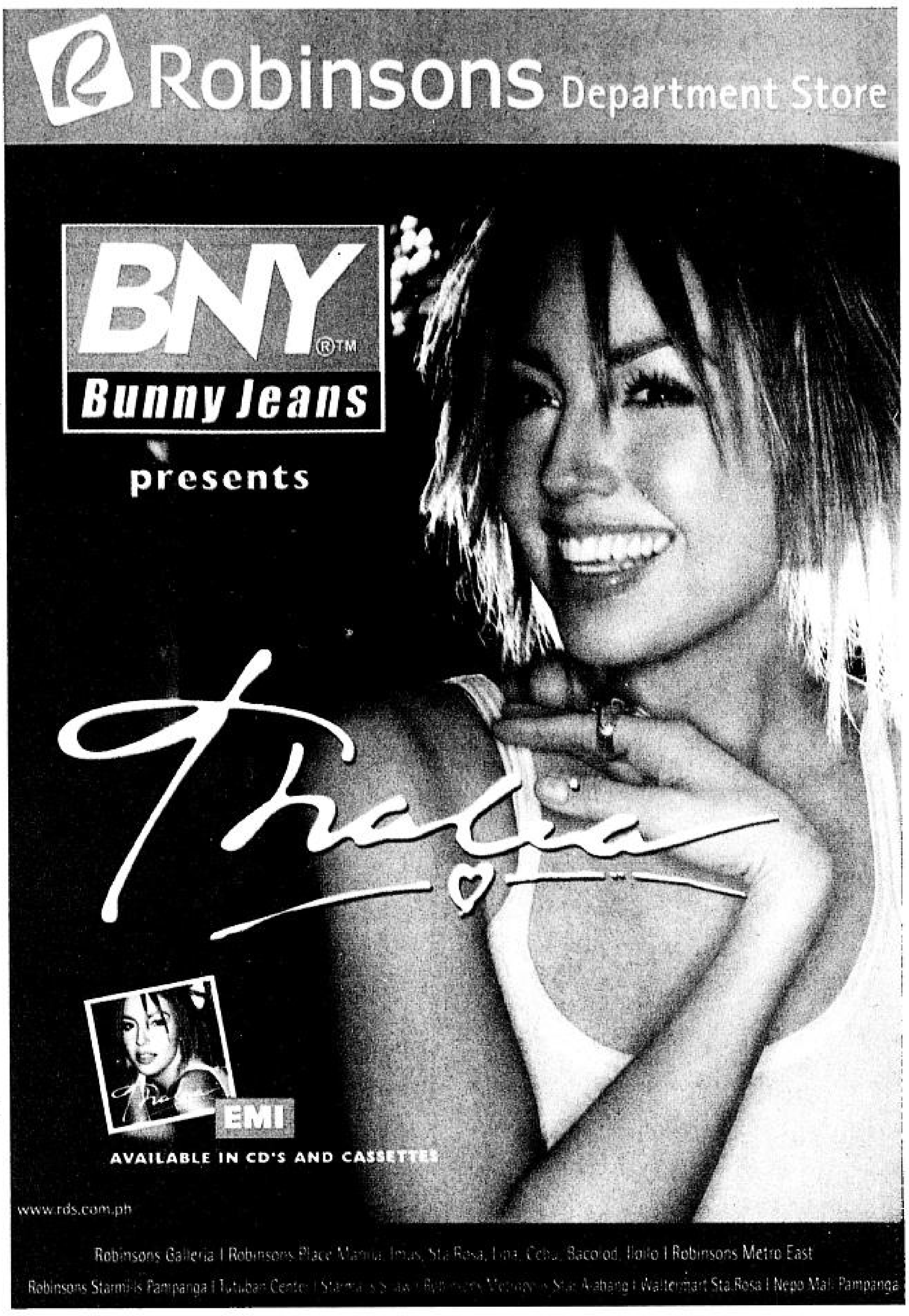
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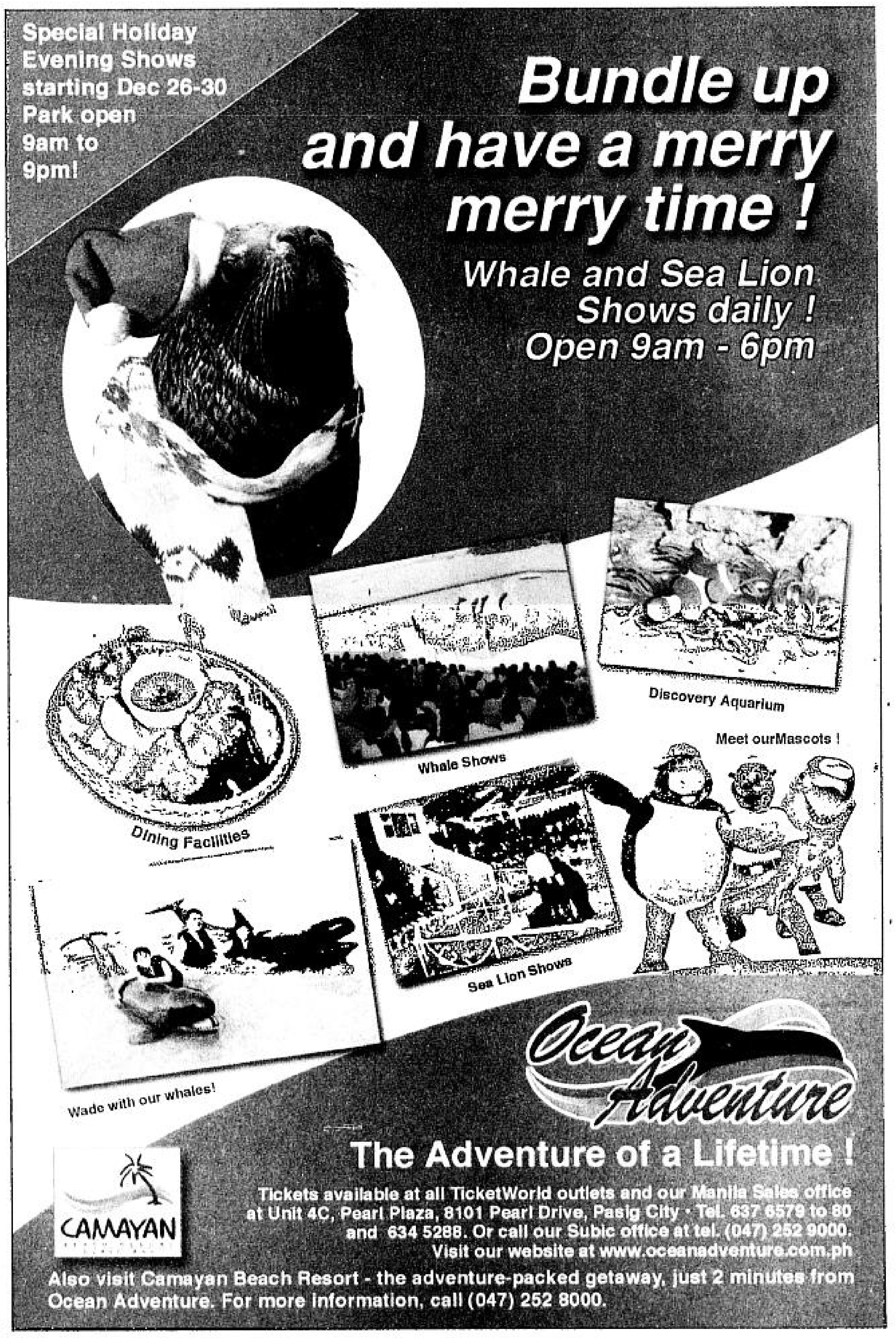
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MAKE merry in style by donning Randy Ortiz's stylish clubwear that consists of vivid polo shirts and sharp suits. From left to right: dark brown five-button jacket with red stitching and matching trousers, hot pink tuxedo shirt with hand-stitching, pleated detail, double-collar and French cuffs; grey jacket and trousers matched with a multi-patterned polo shirt with pleat details, double collar, arm bands and French cuffs; black stretch nylon pea coat with matching trousers and black double-collared polo with pleat detail and red stitching and accents.

NEWBIE model Trishan Cuaso is all set to party in Randy's black pea coat and black polo shirt with bright red accents.

Pretty—and manly—in pink

From page 13

of the spectrum as he addresses the needs of the mass market. RTW shirts, pants and suits that bear his name are sold at all SM department stores nationwide.

"I can't go all out because we cater to a big market," he says. "At the same time, however, I also have a duty to educate the public, especially those who can't go to a designer."

After several seasons of pushing flat-front pants and tapered, three-buttoned suits, Nocom's efforts are beginning to pay off. They're now among his most salable items. He has also moved beyond basic black, white and blue to include more "experimental" colors.

"Lime and periwinkle will be big this season," he says. "Some of my shirts and cardigans will come in such colors."

Thanks to the availability of wrinkle-resistant and stretchable cotton blends, Nocom has added slim silhouettes to his staple of boxy shirts. He has also altered the look of not a few tops by tweaking the shapes and sizes of their collars.

Barba is somewhere in between. The designer, who also does made-to-order clothes, has a line of eye-catching off-the-rack men's tops that go by the name Vittorio. Unlike Nocom, however, Barba's outlets are limited to Sari-Sari Store branches.

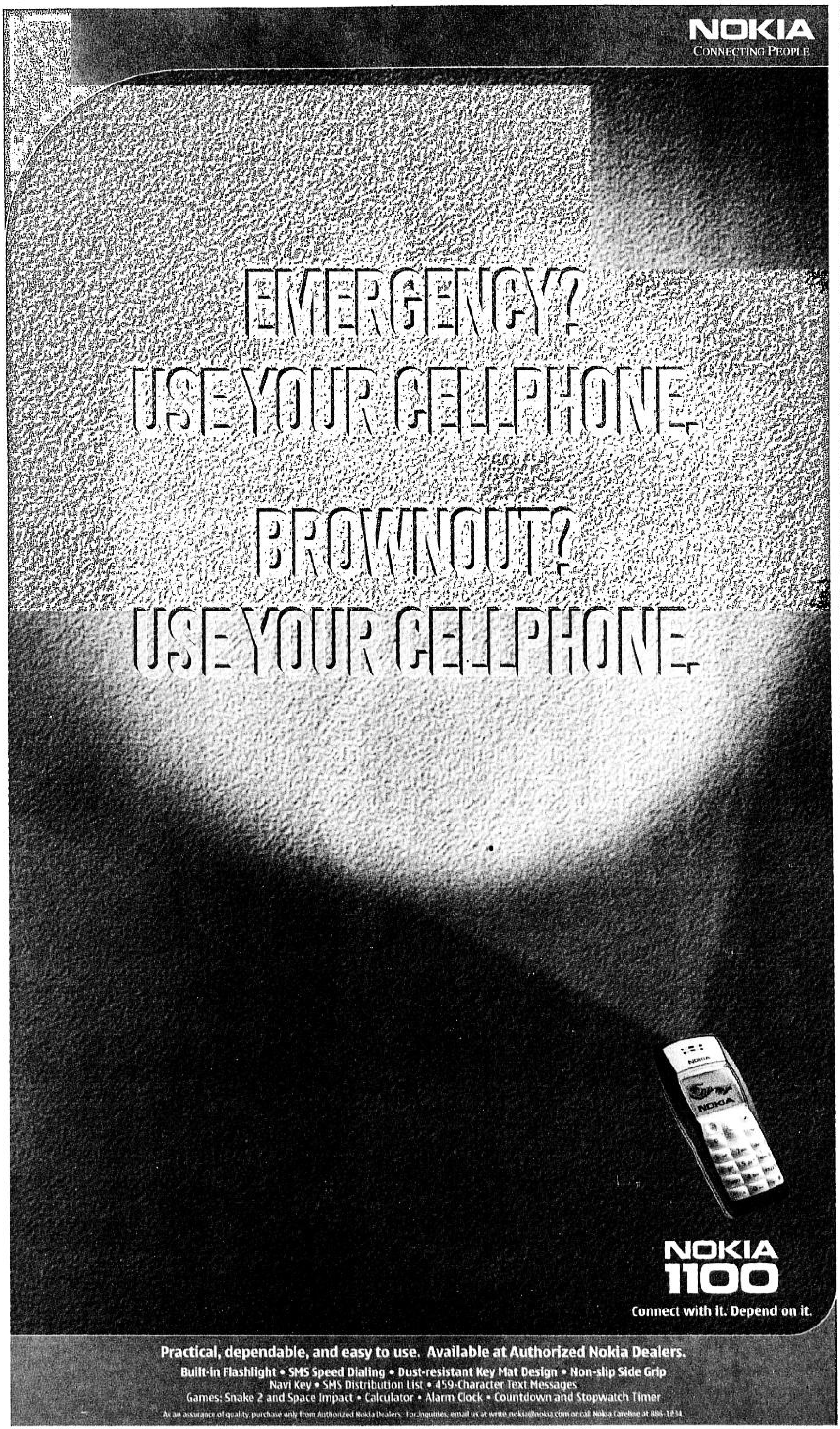
"My colors are as festive as the season," he says, referring to his shirts in pink, lime green and orange. "The shirts' fabrics are also textured and come with subtle details in the form of cutting, fraying and slashing."

There are twists aplenty. Barba, for instance, fashioned a placket that resembles a slim necktie. He also combined argyle prints with dark, cable-knit sleeves to come up with a preppy jacket. His tops, he says, are "strong" enough to work well with basic jeans and chinos.

"Filipino men don't readily embrace new stuff," he says. "They need someone like their girlfriends or a fashion-forward celebrity to convince them to give a certain look a try. They should have a more open mind when they shop." The fact that not a few macho Filipinos are starting to wear pink is a sure sign of progress.

E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph

ATTEND your company Christmas parties in Anthony Nocom's conventional yet smart and attractive work wear basics.



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LIFESTYLE

Pinoy fashion goes WOW

Philippine design shares center stage with tourist destinations in a colorful showcase

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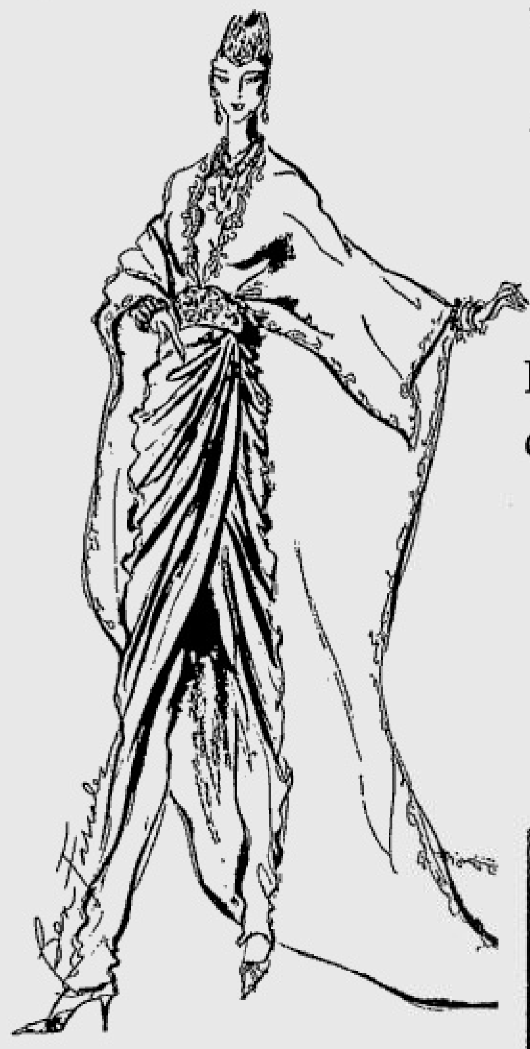


MUSLIM wedding suite from the royal families of Mindanao. Natural-colored Mindanao silk is used to drape the skirt *malong* and also for the dramatic cape veil of the bride by Ben Farrales.

LOCAL and foreign tourists will be treated a grand and colorful showcase of the visual, performing and design arts as the Department of Tourism together with the Fashion Designers Association of the Philippines, the Fashion and Design Council of the Philippines, the Fashion Designers Group and guest designers present WOW Kasuotang Pilipino at the Plaza San Ignacio in Intramuros on Dec. 20.

Tourism Secretary Richard J. Gordon said the fashion show will feature the Philippine tourist destinations, capturing the culture, lifestyle and the arts of the nation's 16 regions.

"As the celebrations for Visit Philippines 2003 peak in Intramuros, it is only but fitting that we highlight our cultural heritage with a centerpiece activity that captures the beauty and splendor of our multifaceted destinations," Gordon said.

The gathering will have the leading style gurus representing the various regions: Olive Ang, Bonjing Chua, Danny de la Cuesta, Mike de la Rosa, Steve de Leon, Dong Omaga Diaz, Larry Espinosa, Danny Franco, Bubum Melgar, Roseller Morabe, Bobby Novenario, Efren Ocampo, Nono Palmos, Richard Papa, Frederick Peralta, Loreto Popioco, Barge Ramos and Edgar San Diego.

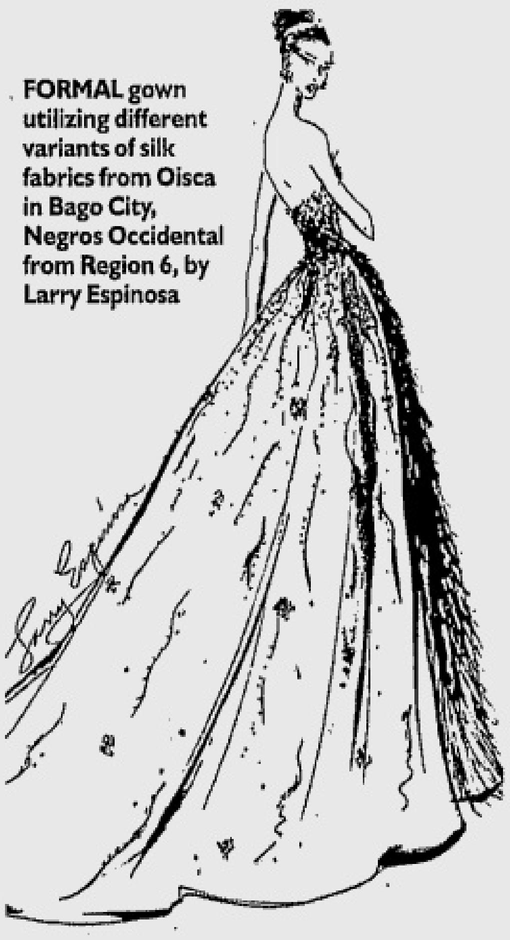
Acclaimed designer Ben Farrales leads the presentation of the bridal collection, which will also feature the designs of Aureo Alonzo, Noli Hans and Boy Gui-noo.

The Uniform Manufacturers and Designers Association will present the latest in corporate wear.

Gordon said that aside from the fashion event, the DOT and its partners have lined up weeklong special events featuring the Best of the Best in the Philippines.

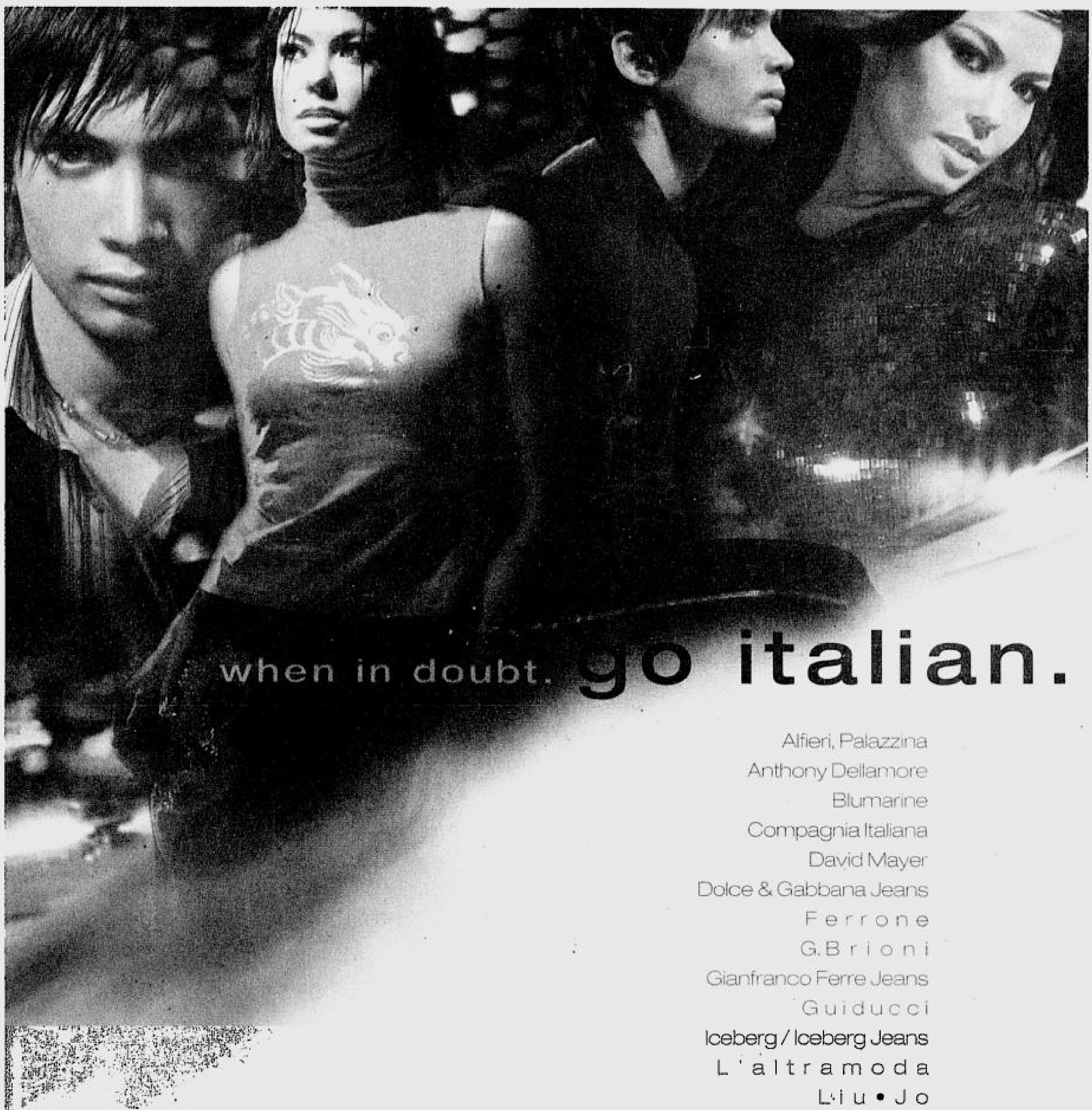
The events include the WOW Pagkaing Pinoy—a smorgasbord of Filipino cuisine and delicacies such as Aklan oysters, Masbate

PINOY/J3



FORMAL gown utilizing different variants of silk fabrics from Oisca in Bago City, Negros Occidental from Region 6, by Larry Espinosa

a proud participant of the
Italian Festival
this holiday season



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RIGODON de Honor dancers Nikki Coseteng, Mayor Marides Fernando, Dr. Elenita Binay, Emily Lopez, Rep. Kim Bernardo-Lokin, Rep. Cynthia Villar and Rep. Neneng Nicolas

ALL set to sway. Joy Conde Cruz and Robert Rockefeller

SHALL we dance? Susan Reyes in a Maria Clara by Pitoy Moreno, with Daikin-Allen hotshot Jun Lagman

BULACAN'S PRIDE. Bonnie Vergel de Dios with Ben de Jesus, Babes Dionisio, Ed Timbol, Justa Tantoco, Ofelia Trinidad and Linabelle Villarica

BEAUTY and her prince. Miss Globe International Maricar Balagtas with handsome Canadian actor Bobby Johnston

THE COUTURIER and his muse. Rajo Laurel created the period Maria Clara gown for exotic Maureen Santiago.

Celebrating the rich and ritzy heritage of Bulacan

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by **Alex Van Hagen** on **Kodak Max**

AHHH, the fragrance of Bulacan's famous flower gardens were all over the place, enthralling the well-heeled invitees right at the foyer of the grand ballroom of Westin Philippine Plaza as an award-winning Malolos choir and a string ensemble serenaded the guests with native music.

This was Club Bulakeña night, *palanggas*, an evening of socializing for a cause. Guests celebrated Bulacan's rich heritage as well as renewed their commitment to a scholarship program that sends deserving poor students to school.

That night was also an auspicious occasion to launch "Saysay Bulacan: A Pictorial History of Bulacan and Its People." This grand book was made possible through the efforts of the Senate's leading crusader for education, Sen. **Tessie Oreta.**

The book, together with the "Folio of Bulacan Music," which was prepared and collated by the Club, will be distributed to schools all over the province. Great idea, huh?

For its crystal anniversary this year, Club Bulakeña highlighted the province's fiesta, fashion and food heritage.

Guests were greeted by a bower of roses and ferns, through which they passed to enter the ballroom. Gents and ladies in evening finery were entertained by the endless playing of valses, danzas and *kundiman* composed by Bulacan's native sons such as National Artists **Francisco Santiago, Nicanor Abelardo, Jose Corazon de Jesus, Levi Celerio** and **Ernani Cuenco,** all played by the UST Symphony Orchestra conducted by Maestro **Herminigildo Ranera.**

ENGINEER Gene and Lydia Reyes, Club Bulakeño founders

LOS Angeles gals. Nymia Cocueco and Beah Javier, both in eye-catching gowns by David Tupaz of LA

WORKING gals of the social set. Lucille Carlos-Locsin in her own creation

Gilded guests relived the stately splendor of the Banquete de Republica during the inauguration of the Malolos Republic. There was **Ofelia Trinidad,** smiling serenely in a 1920s-inspired silver-sequined emerald green terno by **Ben Farrales. Anna Sia** glittered in a **Steve de Leon** *baro't saya* of the American period, while exotic beauty **Maureen Santiago** looked wow in a **Rajo Laurel and Virma Vergel De Dios** and **Linda Cruz** were *tres* elegant in **Patis Tesoro** baro't saya.

Classic **Susan Reyes** was in **Pitoy Moreno,** vivacious **Lucille Carlos** was dressed in her own creation and **Baby Ortiz** was in a **Bujing Danao**-styled 19th-century Maria Clara finery.

Ida Bautista Lomotan, for her part, was radiant in an empire-style purple-and-silver gown by **Dez Bautista,** while one of Manille's great hostesses, glamour gal **Mellie Ablaza,** was iridescent in a slate gray, black-plumed **Ben Farrales** *traje de cola* with bejeweled clasps.

The men, debonair in their barong Tagalogs, were not to be outdone. **Paco de la Rosa** was in Rajo Laurel , **Bert Castro** and **Ben de Jesus** went for **Aureo Alonzo, Sonny Tanchanco** was in Patis Tesoro, **John Gaddi** in **Jeanne Goulbourn, Danny Jacinto** in **Barge Ramos, Louie Ablaza** in Ben Farrales and **Jimmy Laya** in a tour-de-force design by National Artist **Salvador Bernal.**

Ogie Villamar, Sonny Yan, Atun Kaw, Robert Estacio and **Bonnie Vergel de Dios,** meanwhile, all looked drop-dead handsome in Bergamo barongs.

The one-of-a-kind gastronomic feast prepared for the event was inspired by the Inaugural Banquet tendered by President **Emilio Aguinaldo** during the first Philippine Republic.

As program hosts **Maricar Balagtas** and **Gandong Cervantes** noted, the 1898 menu was actually, *kusinang Bulakan*, dressed up in French by Don **Pedro Paterno** to give the then fledgling Republic an image of European sophistication.

The soup was an exotic Ube Cappucino with Pesto Froth. Then came Squid Stuffed with Sour Cream and Celery; Prawns; Lyon Sausage Garnished with Olives; and Pomelo and Dill Dressing. A Camias and Green Apple Sherbet prepared the palate for the main course—a fantastic duet of Salmon Steak and Chicken Roulade.

Dessert was an evocation of heady Bulacan summers, a concoction of Mantecado Ice Cream with Strawberry Jello encrusted with gooseberries and other sweet fruits.

Amid orchestra fanfare, the parade of the national flag of the Katipuneros of Polo and the flag of Paombong hero Gen. **Gregorio del Pilar** signaled the start of the program. Opera diva **Irma Potenciano** then sang the national anthem with bravura brilliance.

Club vice president **Linabelle Villarica** led the opening prayer with a special invocation for the beatification of **Sor Cecilia** and **Sor Dionisia,** the holy sisters from Calumpit, Bulacan.

PARTNERS on the dance floor. John Gaddi and Tess Castro

SONNY Tanchanco with Anna Sia, Charo Yu, Club Bulakeño joint presidents Berna Lomotan Rustia and Patrick Jacinto, Mayor Marides Fernando and MMDA chair Bayani Fernando

BREATHTAKING Maria Claras. Mellie Ablaza and Ofelia Trinidad, both in stunning Ben Farrales gowns, with Vina Trinidad

THE FUN Los Angeles connection. Liza Lomotan, Marietta Guanzon, Rep. Imee Marcos, Tech Fernandez and Paco de la Rosa, all jetting in for the grand occasion

WOMEN ACHIEVERS. The one-of-a-kind Menchie Mabanta bazaar will have celebrity vendors like supermodel Patty Betita and TV personalities Daphne Oseña and Pia Hontiveros—here shown with the indefatigable organizer herself.

The highlight of the evening was the Rigodon de Honor. The *baro't saya* and barong Tagalog worn by the rigodon participants defined four Philippine costume periods—the empire style of the early 19th century, the Maria Clara of the late 19th century, the *baro* with extended sleeves and *saya* of the American Period and the *traje de mestiza* of the 1920's.

Led by this year's joint presidents **Berna Lomotan Rustia** (in a fabulous eye-catching bronze **David Tupaz** creation) and **Patrick Jacinto** (in a Bergamo barong), the dancers had society's namedroppables gracefully waltzing, shimmying and curtsying all over the place, dahlings.

This they did to the strains of **Felipe Estrella's** elegant Rigodon de Republica, which was rearranged by Maestro Ranera.

The courtly choreography by Bujing Danao brought back the empire days when everything was luminous, lambent and luxurious. All this pomp and splendor unfolded according to the masterful direction of **Dez G. Bautista,** who agreed to be part of this year's ball "only if it is a tribute to the rich cultural heritage of Bulacan." He got his wish, *palanggas*.

Needless to say, this year's club officers and advisers, notably Ambassador **Bienvenido R. Tantoco Sr., Justa Tantoco, Nedy Tantoco, Sonny Tanchanco,** engineer **Gene** and **Lydia Reyes, Ofelia** and **Vina Trinidad, Ogie Villamar, Tess Castro, Louie Ablaza** and Dr. Jimmy Laya, and workasonic lady Berna L. Rustia, all deserve pats in the back for making the annual Club Bulakeña ball one of the most awaited dazzlers of the year.

Yes, *palanggas*, our Maria Claras have definitely come a long way.

Bazaar buzz

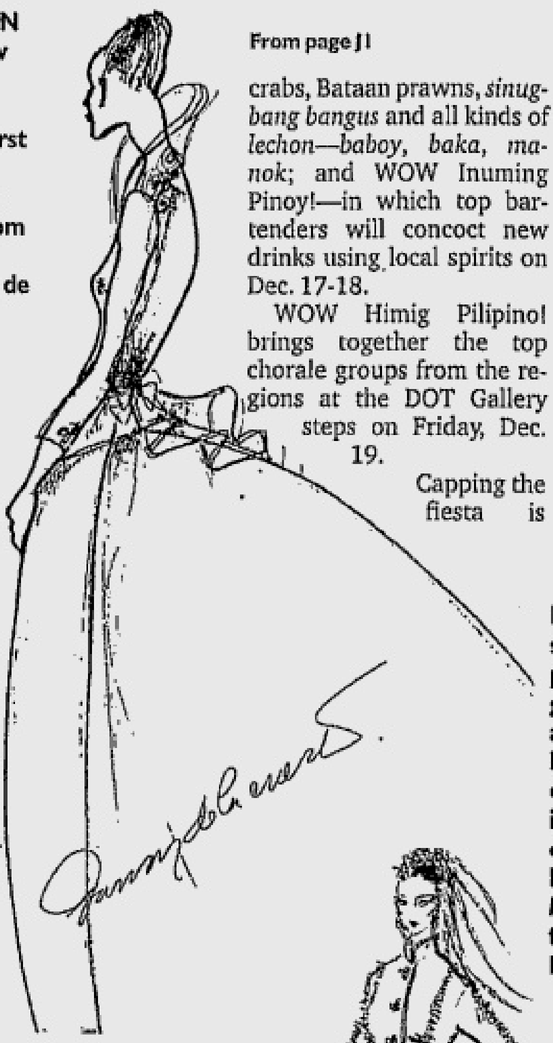
If you haven't finished your Christmas shopping yet, now is the best time to do it, dahlings, with bazaars and fairs springing up right and left.

"FOB Manila: A Holiday Treat" opened last Dec. 6 and 7, and will be up again this weekend, Dec. 13 and 14 from 9 a.m.-9 p.m. at the Makati Sports Club, Leviste St., Makati.

Menchie Mabanta's much-anticipated bazaar will be here, with celebrities selling their own treats and wares. The likes of **Angel Aquino, Vina Morales, Daphne Oseña , Pia Hontiveros** and **Patty Betita** are expected to attract more shoppers and add glitter to the event.

Major credit cards are accepted. Those who purchase tickets automatically get free entrance to the other bazaars. See you there!

Pinoy fashion goes WOW



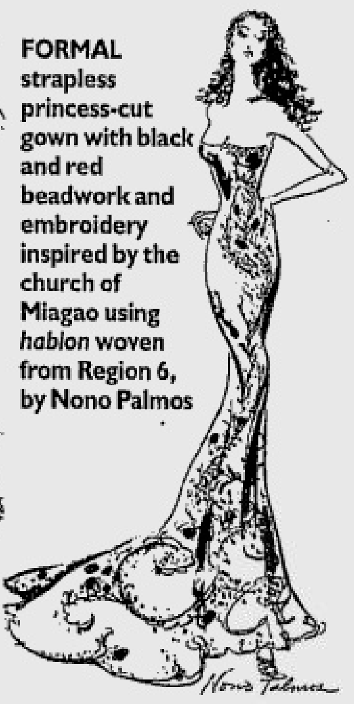
CHRISTIAN Dior's New Look is translated into sunburst colors in cotton and silk *abel* from Region I in this Danny de la Cuesta creation

From page J1

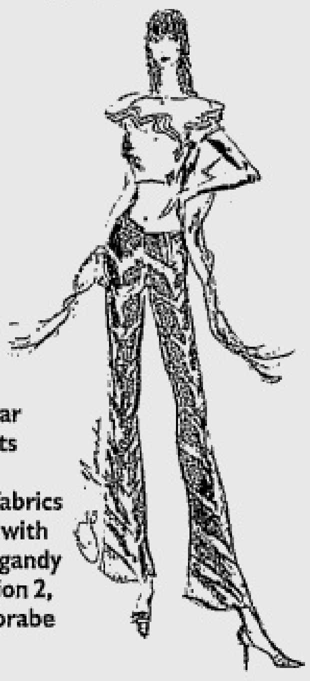
crabs, Bataan prawns, *sinugbang bangus* and all kinds of *lechon—baboy, baka, manok*; and WOW Inuming Pinoy!—in which top bartenders will concoct new drinks using local spirits on Dec. 17-18.

WOW Himig Pilipino! brings together the top chorale groups from the regions at the DOT Gallery steps on Friday, Dec. 19.

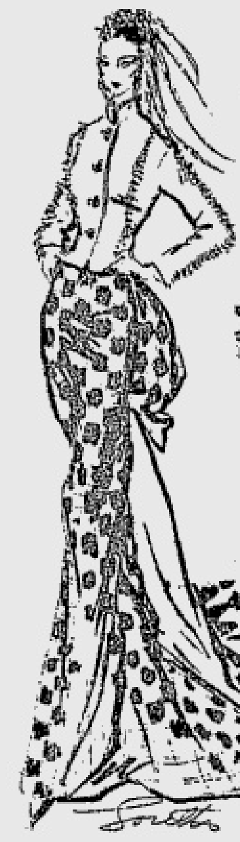
Capping the fiesta is WOW Kapistahang Sayaw Pilipino at the Quirino Grandstand, in which hundreds of street revelers from the regions will compete for the Best of the Philippines Street Festival. Spectators can get a glimpse of Cebu's Yagyag Festival, Bacolod's Masskara Festival, Tacloban's Los Pintados Festival and Surigao's Bonok-Bonok. A P1 million prize awaits the grand winner with the second and third prize winners getting P500,000 and P250,000, respectively.



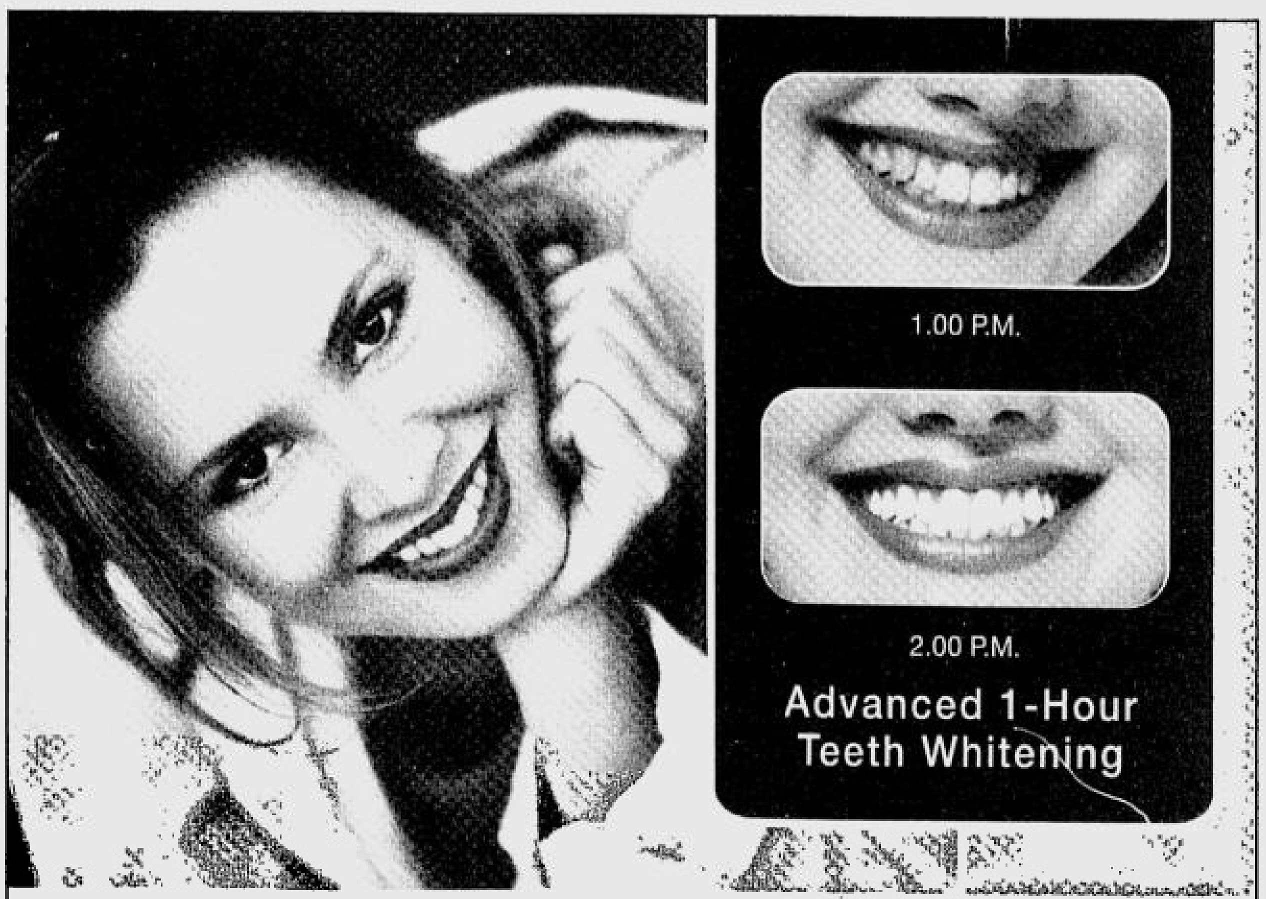
FORMAL strapless princess-cut gown with black and red beadwork and embroidery inspired by the church of Miagao using *hablon* woven from Region 6, by Nono Palmos



LUXE wear capri pants utilizing *gaddang* fabrics accented with cotton organdy from Region 2, by Olé Morabe



MODERN translation of Emilio Aguinaldo's military suit using dyed piña with *sinamay* embroidered from Region 4, by Loretto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25, Closed (Christmas Day) • 26-30, 9:00 am-8:30 pm •
31, 9:00 am-8:00 pm • Jan. 1, Closed (New Year's Day)

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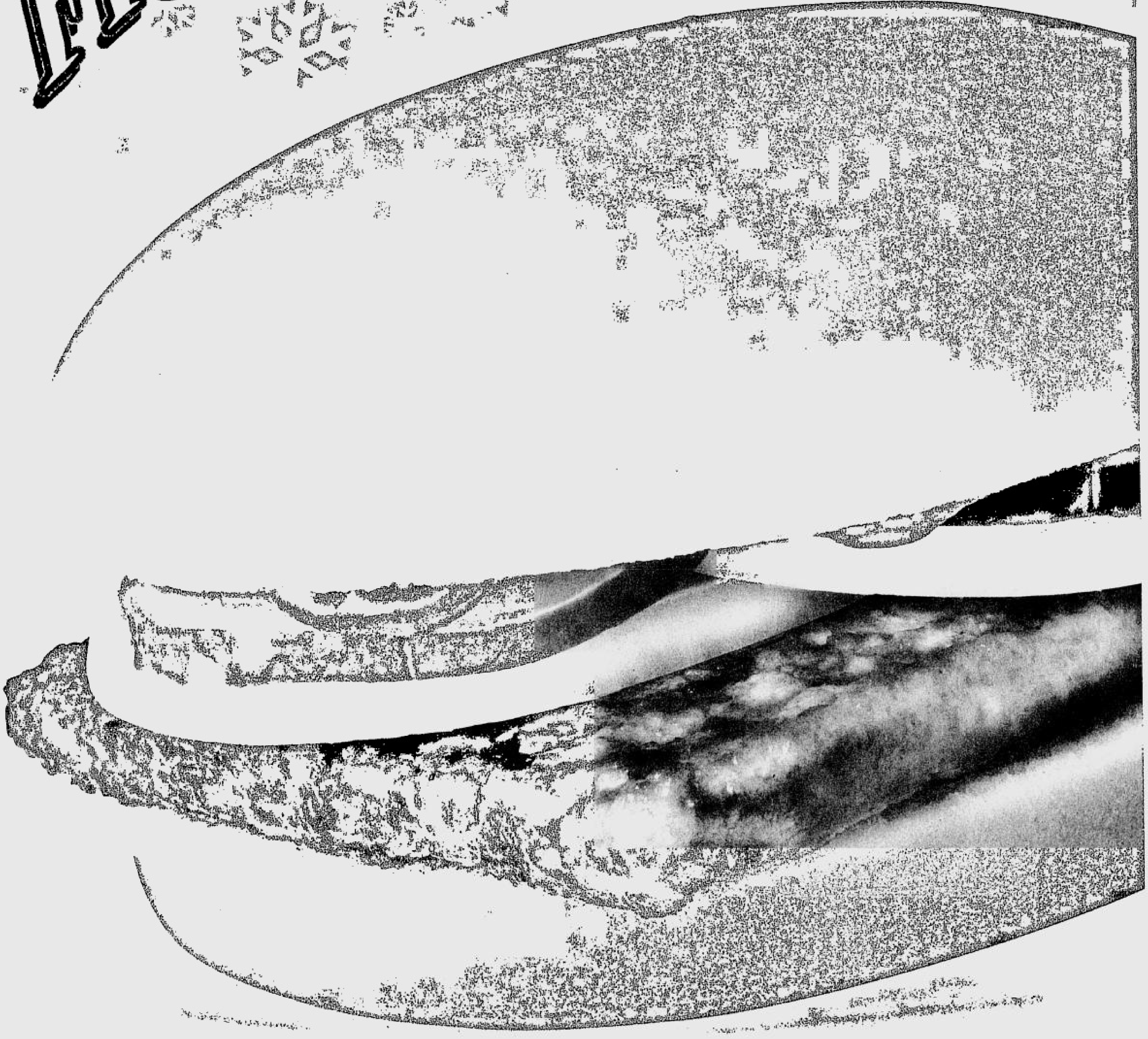
Jan. 1, Closed (New Year's Day)

12 Days of Christmas Treats

Free Hamburger!



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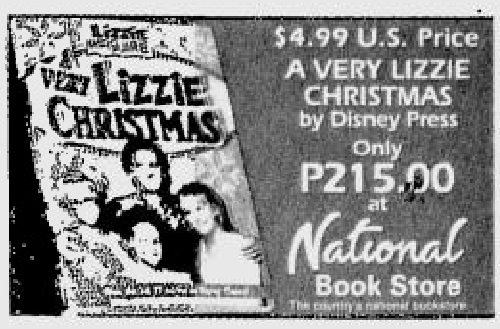
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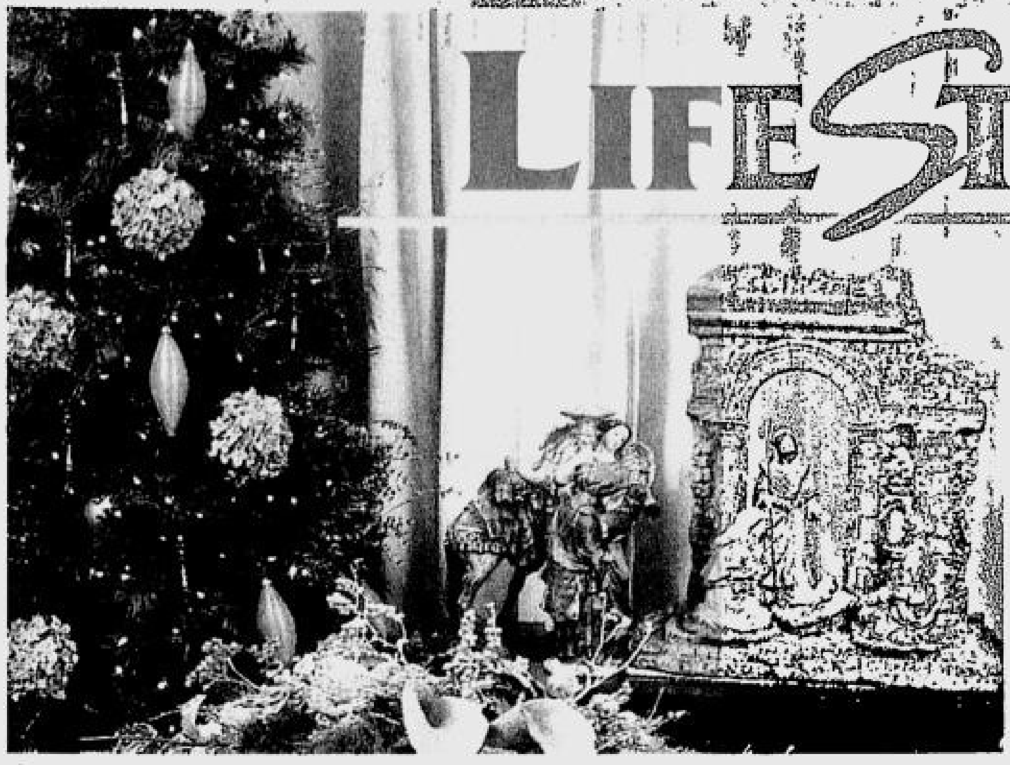

Blue Christmas at the malls

SM Supermalls sparkle with assorted treats and trimmings this season.

SM Supermalls celebrate Christmas with Pepsi. In a fresh departure from the traditional red and green holiday colors, the mall decorates its interiors with blue bubbles inspired by Pepsi blue.

Sparkling and scintillating, the blue bubbles express the season's merriment and lightheartedness.

SM will feature children's choirs in its "Yuletide Caroling Cheers" every afternoon until Dec. 24. Each mall will also have a Santa Claus corner where shoppers can have their souvenir photos taken until Jan. 12.

SM's provincial malls will show their creative side with the "Christmas Arts and Crafts" exhibits using Pepsi materials. On display are lanterns, nativity sets and trees.

SM City Lucena and SM City Iloilo will have a *belen* making contest.

Meanwhile, in SM City Cebu, Marilao, Davao and Cagayan de Oro, customers can join the lantern-making contest until Dec. 20.

Prizes include P25,000 for the grand prize, P15,000 for second place and 10,000 for third place.

The Christmas display windows of different stores will also take part in a contest. Prizes include P40,000 for the grand prize, P30,000 for second place and P20,000 for third place.

Capping the festivities will be the fireworks display on New Year.

GLITTER mini-tree accented with lilac and bluegreen berries available at SM's Our Home.

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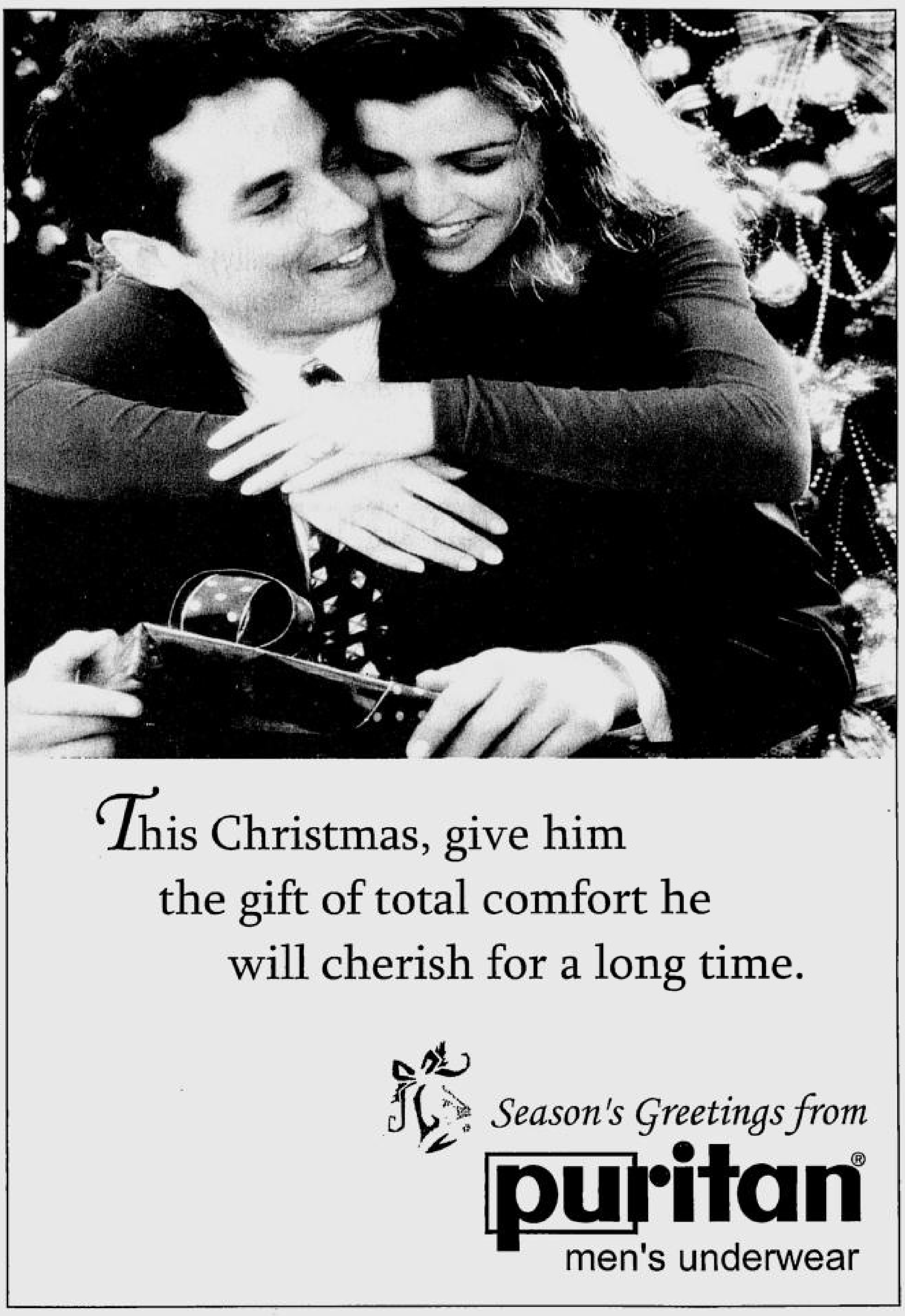
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THE CHAMBER OF REAL ESTATE & BUILDERS' ASSOCIATIONS, INC.

CREBA

Celebrating its 30th Anniversary

December 12, 2003, 7:00 pm
M/S Philippines (A Manila Hotel facility)
Manila Floating Hotel and Restaurant
berthed at Pier 15, South Harbor
Manila (behind Manila Hotel).

Founder & Chairman MANUEL M. SERRANO

FOR three decades, the greater part of my time has been devoted largely to the advocacies and initiatives of the Chamber of Real Estate and Builders' Association. It has been a passion that has added more meaning and significance to my life. I take my duties and responsibilities as founder and chairman of the board of CREBA as a calling.

The end-all and be-all of my involvement with CREBA is the enhancement of the quality of life of our people through housing and community building. To be able to do this, the government and the private sector should join hands to: (1) install the necessary infrastructure for housing; (2) extend appropriate incentives to all industry players involved in housing delivery; and (3) give the homeless Filipino households the opportunity to acquire decent homes.

During its infancy, CREBA had to contend with the reluctance and skepticism of some related organizations that an umbrella organization might encroach on their independence and autonomy. But CREBA has proven through the years, as evidenced by its growth and accomplishments, that is has what it takes to work for the common good of all sectors in the industry.

This is one inspiration that keeps me going. I have never thought of throwing in the tower even during times of frustrations and glaring indifference. Problems serve as an impetus that goads me into action in pursuit of our goals. It is my firm conviction - and I always impress this upon CREBA's leadership - that what we have started, we have to finish it even if it takes a lifetime to do so.

CREBANS should be proud of what the organization has accomplished. Yes, there are other advocacy matters that have yet to be acted upon, but we can say that we have achieved is no mean feat because the bottom line has always been the economic and social advancement of our people. With the foundation that we have built over 30 years, we can pass the torch to future CREBANS with the confidence that out work will bear good fruits in due time for the generations to come.

President FLORENTINO S. DULALIA, JR

OUR 30th anniversary certainly deserves a page in the history of the country's real estate and housing industry. It is also beginning to carve a niche in the global scene. From a core group of 16 men of great vision and dedication, CREBA has grown to be a 3,500-strong umbrella organization. I should give due credit and gratitude to the hard work and cooperation of the local chapters. They are really the backbone of CREBA. Their genuine support and commitment has made CREBA stronger and bolder to go for its goals and enlarge its territory by setting up international chapters. The twin goals are to unite the different sectors of the industry and provide a single vision towards national development.

Aside from advocating reforms and working on issues and policies for industry development and national economic recovery, the organization also explores avenues for marketing across the seas via the CREBA International Foundation, Inc. Windows have been opened to make the world see the vast investment potentials for real estate in the Philippines. Our international operations include the establishment and activation of international chapters abroad, particularly in the United States, Canada, Europe and Asia.

Going global calls for proper preparation and hard work. We have to raise our development standards to make our projects more competitive. This is a key to attracting investment, a major factor in our economy, in this regard, the government and the private sector play highly critical roles.

I congratulate all CREBANS on the occasion of our 30th anniversary. Your faith, trust, and cooperation have brought the Chamber of Real Estate & Builders' Associations closer to its dreams and goals of globalization.

Let CREBA be strong for the country and for the world.

CREBA COUNCIL OF LEADERS

Manuel M. Serrano 1973-1976
Antonio S. Dimalanta 1977
Victorio V. Soliven 1978
Nathaniel von Einsiedel 1979 - 1980
Amado S. Bagatsing 1981, 1982, 1986
Arsenio L. de Castro 1983
Antonio A. Turalba 1984 - 1985
Razul Z. Requesto 1987 - 1988
Charlie V. Gorayeb 1989 - 1990
Sept. to Dec. 1994,
1995, 1998, 2001
Pedro C. Tario 1991 - 1992
Domingo D. de Vera 1993
Porthos P. Almajose Jan. to Aug. 1994
Carlos A. Rañeses 1996
Jerry M. Navarrete 1997
Jaime A. Cura 1999 - 2000
Florentino S. Dulalia, Jr. 2002

On its 30th anniversary celebration, CREBA presents for the first time ever the Pillar Awards to outstanding leaders and members who have shown outstanding initiative, forethought, hard work and dedication in helping the organization ride the tides of time, push meaningful advocacies, and play an important role in the advancement of the industry and in nation building.

CREBA 30th Anniversary Awardees

Manuel M. Serrano
PILLAR AWARD

Pedro C. Tario
HALL OF FAME

Charlie V. Gorayeb
AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Amado S. Bagatsing
HALL OF FAME

Teresita C. Millan
AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Domingo D. De Vera
SERVICE AWARD

Victorio V. Soliven
AWARD OF DISTINCTION

Florentino S. Dulalia, Jr.
SERVICE AWARD

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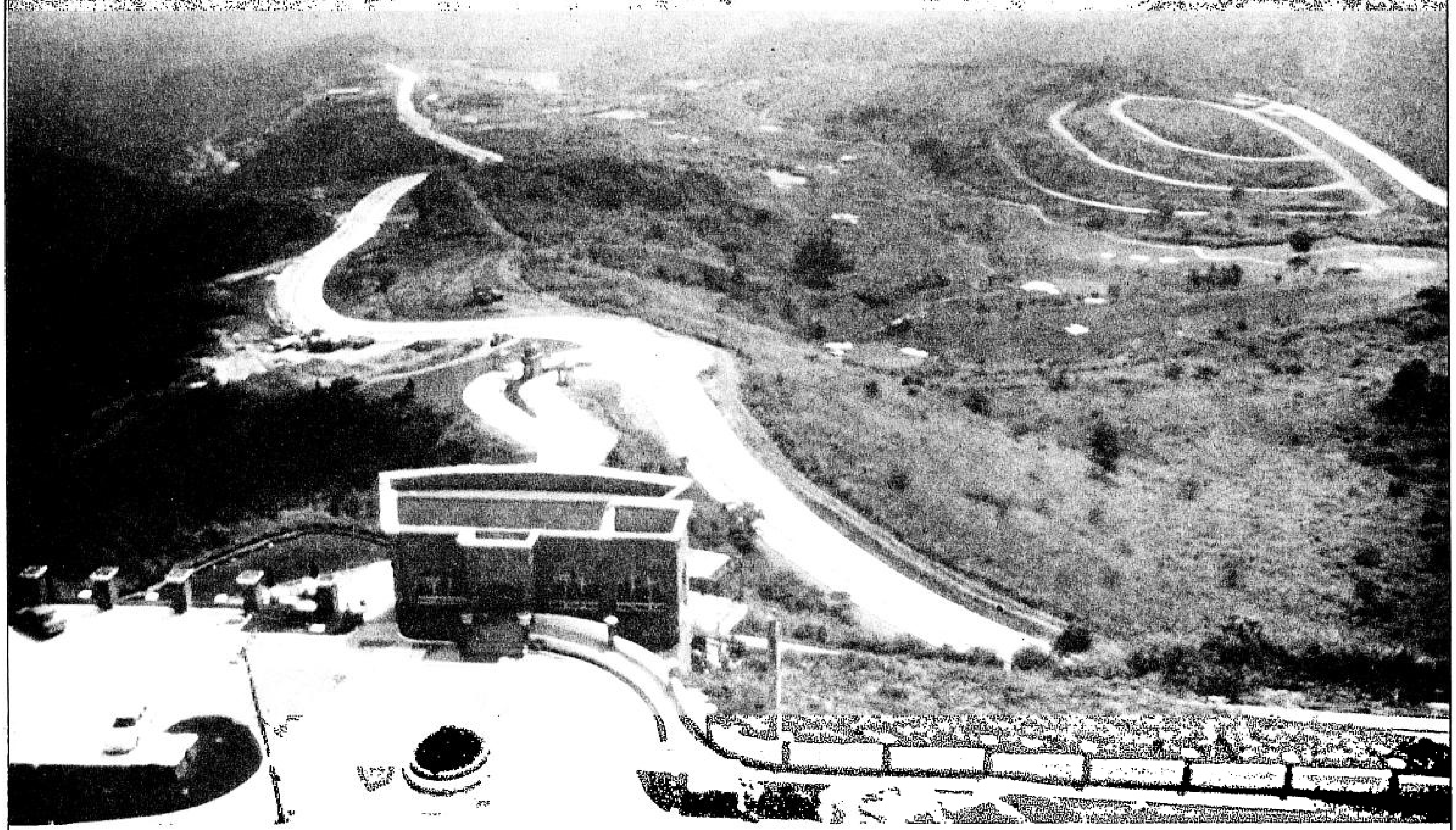
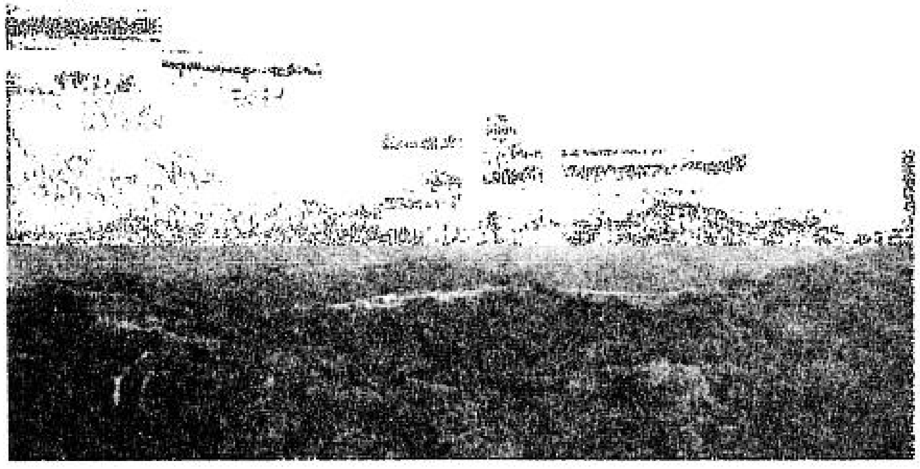
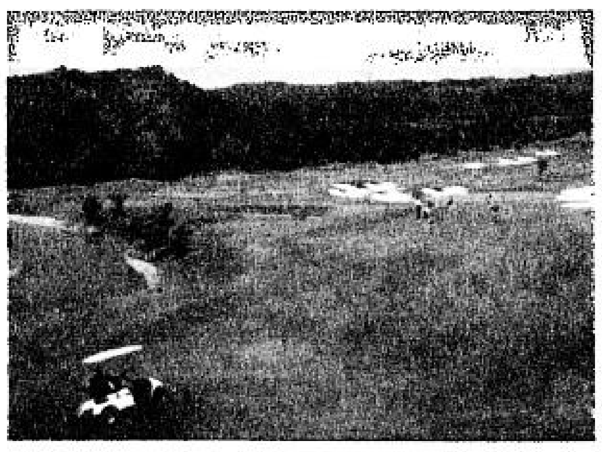
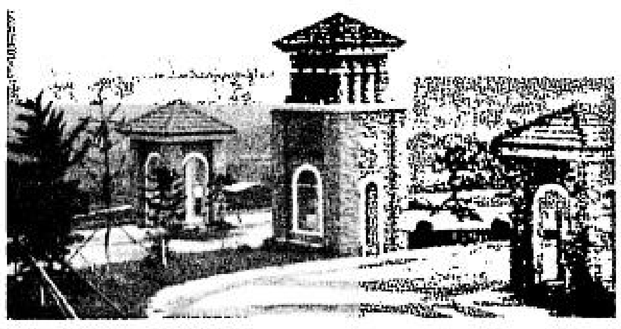
OPEN HOUSE
Saturday, December 13, 2003

Some people think the view is good enough to build on.









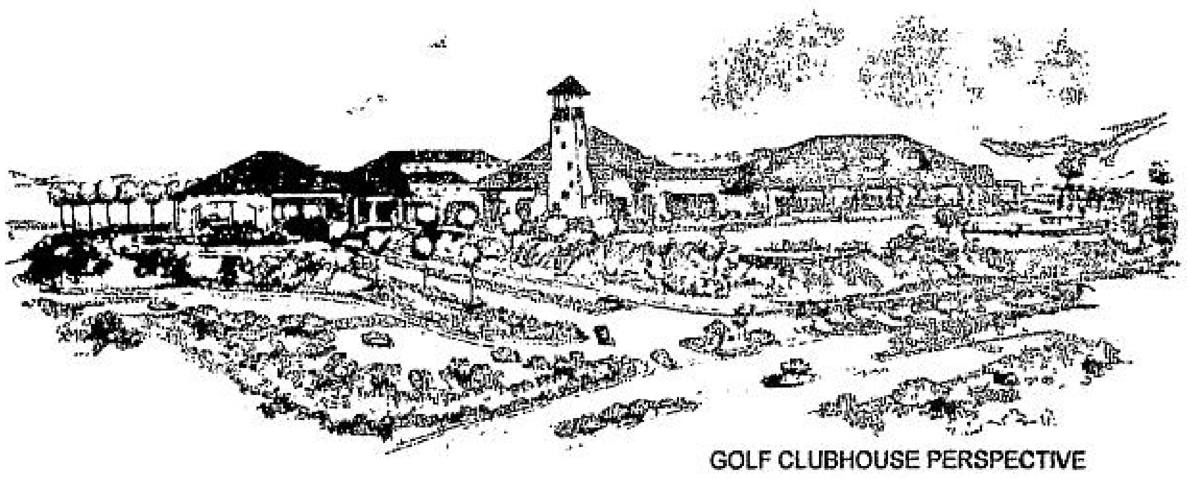
We agree.

So we built the entire road network, the entrance gate and welcome tower, and planted more trees and created the landscaping.

Now a Championship golf course gives you undulating fairways, natural rolling terrain, and the winds to play in.

We've started work on the Golf Clubhouse, to give you a place to relax in, and enjoy views of the lake and the greens.

Soon, the Community Clubhouse will rise, to give the family more reasons for a great time.



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Brittany's CrossWinds: Living in a Swiss-inspired, pine-laden enclave

Brittany's vision: themed, master-planned upscale residential communities that offer superior benefits and value that keeps growing. CrossWinds beckons to a lucky few who will enjoy the great life it offers.

A CrossWinds kitchen has ample space and optimal functionality as the heart of your home.

The clubhouse, with its authentic Swiss setting, provides inspiration for how future home units at Crosswinds will look.

BRITTANY Corporation's CrossWinds, the country's only Swiss-inspired pine estate south of Manila, is well on the way to becoming a reality, as it takes shape in a scenic, secluded location tucked away among gentle rolling hills in Tagaytay. Easily accessible from the metropolis, CrossWinds is a retreat of over 55 hectares, located past the route to the South Luzon Expressway exit via Sta. Rosa, on the left side of the highway just before People's Park. CrossWinds is also accessible via Aguinaldo Highway.

Staying on weekends and holidays at Crosswinds is the closet you can come to visiting another country without actually going abroad. Imagine yourself waking up to a cool, and pleasant morning away from the city, every day you're there, in the luxurious comfort of your chalet-type home, with its Swiss-inspired architecture including wood patterns, a spacious porch and overhanging eaves.

What's more, your home is set amid a landscape dotted with pine trees. Brittany has brought in some 8,000 pine trees from Australia, of a specie determined to be the best suited for Tagaytay soil. That's a lot of pine adding to the special ambiance around your home. Think about it - just being there will be reminiscent of Christmas 365 days a year!

Walk down to the CrossWinds chalet, with its interior furnishings designed by sisters Ivy and Cynthia Almario of Atelier Almario. The chalet is a circular, open bungalow with a fireplace in the center. With its authentic Swiss setting, it provides inspiration for how future home units will look. The entrance looks out on a sloping hill, on winding concrete roads, manicured grass lawns, on white and brown homes with pitched roofs in the fashion of chalets.

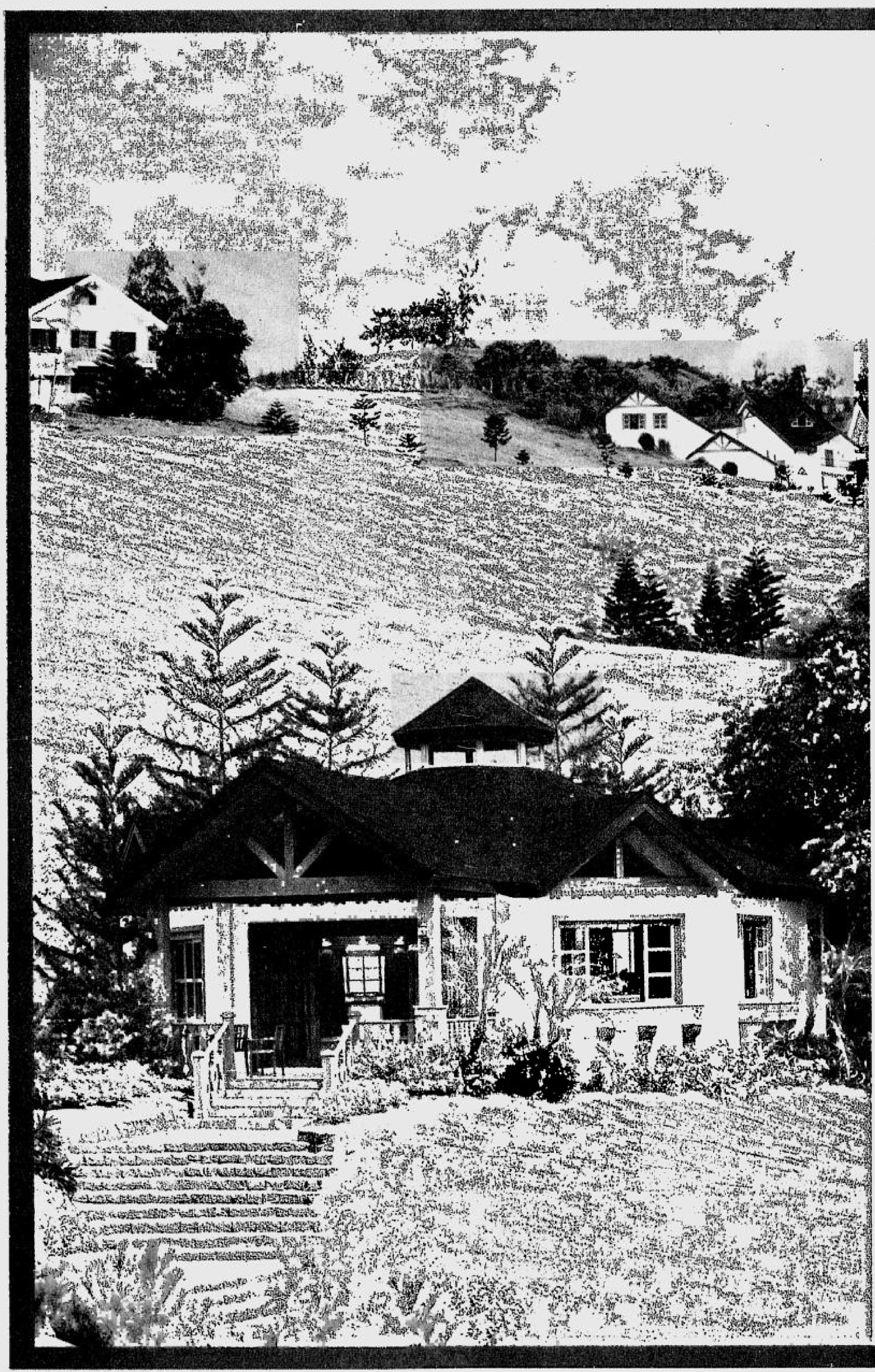
Units currently under development at CrossWinds are limited clusters of Swiss quadrilles consisting of four homes each, with 60% sold to date. Designing the quadrilles are Recio + Casas Architects, and SC and A. The quadrilles are multi-family units sharing two common walls out of the four. The clusters have the overall advantage of freeing up outdoor space, Brittany's application of the "great room" concept.

Each of the two-storey quadrille units of two-bedroom homes offers approximately 135 sq. m. of floor space and sells for about P4.5 million. The living and dining areas on the ground level are wide and spacious, intended for relaxation and entertaining visitors. The living room is bordered by a porch from which the hills and the sky are visible. Kitchen space is ample. Upstairs are the bedrooms, with the master bedroom featuring an ensuite toilet with a walk-in closet. Both bedrooms have access to a balcony, to better appreciate the Swiss village - type surroundings. The pitched roof allows for optional attic space.

Three-bedroom quadrille units, each with a floor space of 165 sq. m., are also available for as low as P5.5 million per unit.

Individual lots are likewise available, ranging from cuts of 450 sq. m. to 1,000 sq. m. plus, to build your future chalet on.

Faithful to Brittany's vision of developing themed, master-planned upscale residential communities that offer superior benefits while continuing to appreciate in value, CrossWinds beckons to a select and lucky few who will enjoy the great life it offers.



HOME SWISS HOME

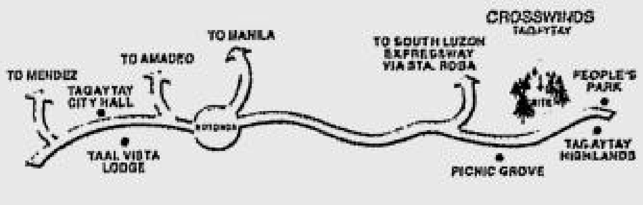
At Crosswinds, you could have your very own little piece of Switzerland, whether it's land for a future home or a chalet you can live in right away.

The homes combine Swiss-inspired wood patterns, wide porches and overhanging eaves. The interiors feature a wide open space, perfect for family gatherings.

And the homes are set against gentle, rolling hills, surrounded by pine trees under a calm, quiet ambience.

It's a great life at Crosswinds–your home Swiss home.

To know more about **Crosswinds, Tagaytay**, call us at **850 2868** and **850 3084** or email us at **mktg@brittany.com.ph**. Or come over to Crosswinds this weekend and see what the Swiss life is all about.



CROSSWINDS
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